

22-00-01

Leroy Joseph Thorpe, Jr.
ANC Commissioner (2C02)
1704 Fifth St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

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MAR-8 09:40

March 4, 2000

Robert R. Rigsby
Corporation Counsel
Government of the District of Columbia
441 Fourth St. NW
Suite 1060N
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Yale Laundry Hotel Proposal

Dear Mr. Rigsby,

I am the Recording Secretary of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2C. This letter is to make you aware of irregularities and actions by certain Commissioners that may be in violation of ANC 2C's by-laws and of District of Columbia Code Section 1-262 (d), Section 402.1 and 402.2.

(1) Illegal meeting called by Commissioner Goring

Commissioner Lydia Goring has called a Special Meeting of the Commission to take place March 13, 2000 to consider a controversial proposal to build a hotel in a residential neighborhood of our community.

Specific guidelines govern regular and special meetings of the ANC. According to Article V, Section 5 of ANC2C by-laws as amended 1/14/99,

"Special meetings of the Commission can be called by the Chairperson or by written request of two-thirds of the Commission membership. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the notice and no other topic may be discussed at that meeting."

These procedures are derived from District of Columbia Code Section 1-262 (d), Section 402.1 and 402.2, which instructs

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Advisory Neighborhood Commissions to establish by-laws governing operating procedures.

As of this writing, however, neither the Chairperson nor two-thirds of the Commission have requested a Special Meeting. I attempted to contact Ms. Goring directly by telephone and, not receiving a return call, left messages to apprise her of these procedures.

Ms. Goring did not return my phone calls and to my knowledge, intends to have the meeting, against our procedures.

(2) Other irregularities regarding the hotel controversy

Ms. Goring has displayed other irregular actions regarding the Yale Laundry Hotel proposal. At the Commission's regular monthly meeting March 1, 2000, Ms. Goring introduced a motion to support the hotel proposal. The motion was seconded.

I introduced an amendment limiting the height of the proposed hotel to the maximum height of other buildings in the square. The motion was seconded.

When the vote on the amendment was called, three commissioners voted for it, Ms. Goring voted against. One commissioner abstained.

Ms. Goring then began shouting and tore up the meeting agenda. She left the meeting abruptly, eliminating the quorum.

Ms. Goring's son-in-law then approached the Commission physically in a verbally abusive manner. Other disruptive actions took place. Over two dozen officers of the Metropolitan Police Department had to be called in to break up the meeting. One commissioner, Ms. Doris Brooks, gashed her leg and had to be taken to the hospital.

Ms. Goring broke up the quorum of the meeting when she did not agree with the vote the Commission took. Her actions prevented the Commission from taking official action. Now Ms. Goring is attempting to call a special meeting not on the public schedule of the Commission and with limited

opportunities for public notice to have this issue considered in a less visible venue.

(3) Potential Conflict of Interest

Ms. Goring owns an investment property at 1105 Fifth St. NW, in the same square as the proposed hotel. This property is situated between other properties owned by the hotel developer. Its value could be substantially increased if the proposed hotel and other projects by this developer went forward.

Section 2-13 (a) of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners Manual states that "a conflict of interest exists when a Commissioner is required to take an action or make a decision that would affect directly or indirectly the Commissioner's own financial or personal interest." (p. 2-13)

When an ANC Commissioner has a conflict of interest, according to the manual, the Commissioner

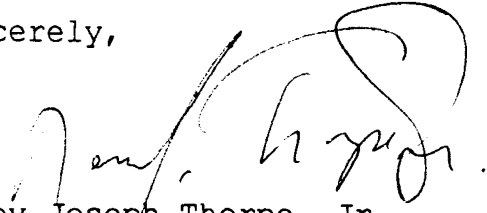
"is required to prepare a written statement describing the matter and the nature of the potential conflict. The Commissioner must then deliver a copy of the statement to the Director of Campaign Finance, the Board of Elections and Ethics, and the Chairperson of the commissioner's ANC. The Commissioner should then request to be excused from votes, deliberations and other actions on the matter on which a conflict or potential conflict exists." (p. 2-14)

Ms. Goring's ownership of 1105 Fifth St. NW would appear to warrant a statement describing a potential conflict of interest. Yet Ms. Goring has not only not issued such a statement, but she has voted on this matter, lobbied other Commissioners on this matter, and used disruptive actions in Commission meetings when she did not agree with other Commissioner's views on this matter.

In summary, a series of irregular actions regarding the proposed Yale Laundry hotel are of serious concern. I would appreciate any guidance you could offer as to how the Commission should proceed.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leroy Thorpe, Jr.", written in black ink.

Leroy Joseph Thorpe, Jr.
Recording Secretary, ANC2C

Cc: Commissioner Lydia Goring
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2C members
Councilmember David A. Catania, D.C. Council
Historic Preservation Review Board