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June 6, 2002

Alberto Bastida, Secretary
Zoning Commission
Government of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

D.C. DEPARTMENT OF ZONING
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Dear Mr. Bastida:

I am writing to express my opposition to an application to the D.C. Zoning Commission for a planned unit development (PUD) and zoning map amendment (ZC 02-17) for the property located at 5401 Western Avenue, at the intersection with Military Road in the Friendship Heights neighborhood. The applicant, Stonebridge Associates, requests that the site, currently zoned for low density housing, be up-zoned to R-5-D and developed with a nine-story apartment building with 200-225 rental units and retail space.

I live two blocks south of this site, in one of D.C.'s beautiful neighborhoods of single family homes, lawns and trees; communities with a small town atmosphere nicely hidden away from the cities bustling commercial areas (in this case, along Wisconsin and Western Avenues). The site proposed for redevelopment currently houses the Washington Clinic and land adjacent to the Abraham and Louise Lisner Home. It has a lovely green park with many majestic trees that creates an important buffer from the unattractive commercial buildings beyond. There are other major housing and commercial developments planned for sites very close to this one: the current Hecht's department store, Chevy Chase Plaza, the GEICO complex, and the WMATA bus garage. This imminent construction of approximately 2 million square feet will add considerably to the already congested traffic on the major roads in the area.

I feel very strongly that the site should **remain at the current zoning level** of R-2 and R-5-B and be developed in a scale and manner that is harmonious with our neighborhood and consistent with the primary theme of the Comprehensive Plan for Ward 3: "protecting the ward's . . . most outstanding characteristic . . . its low density, stable residential neighborhoods" where there is "pride and commitment to neighborhood and home." A PUD under this zoning would still allow for significant new housing for this housing opportunity area (an estimated 117 apartments or 42 townhouses). In addition, I would fervently hope that as much as possible of the lawn and trees be preserved. I would prefer to see owner-occupied housing rather than rental property, and would welcome options for low income residents – housing that is in especially short supply in the District.

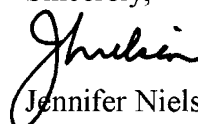
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-17
Exhibit 20

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-17
EXHIBIT NO.20

I have read the Takoma Central District Plan, and noticed that the housing proposed for this site, which is similar to our own (a housing opportunity area at a Metro station surrounded by single family homes) is of a far more modest density than what Stonebridge proposes for our neighborhood. I was impressed with how emphatically the land use plan maintains the “village character” of that area. Indeed, it is in the long-term interest of the District to preserve the charm and human scale of its neighborhoods in this way, rather than allow excessive development to eat away at the few remaining sources of refuge. I therefore request that PUD application ZC 02-17 not be approved in its current form.

I thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Nielsen