

September 16, 2002

Re: Office of Zoning Case # ZC 02 -17 (Stonebridge Assoc.)

Carol Mitten, Chairman
Zoning Commission
District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, D.C. 20001

2002 SEP 16 AM 9:45
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

Dear Chairman Mitten:

As a resident of the Friendship Heights neighborhood, I have been watching the debate over the proposed Stonebridge development at the Washington Clinic/Lisner Home site (at the intersection of Military Road and Western Avenue), and it appears that many public officials and the developer are not addressing the fundamental issue raised by the community with respect to development of this site. Simply stated, the neighborhood is asking is that the developer be required to adhere to the rules established by the Office of Planning and the Zoning Commission when they decided to zone this tract of land for low and moderate-density residential development (R-2 and R-5-B).

In a curious twist of logic, the community's request is being portrayed by some as obdurate and unreasonable, when all we are asking is that the Zoning Commission's earlier decision to upgrade the zoning of this site to R-2 and R-5-B (in recognition of its proximity to the Friendship Heights Metro) be respected and adhered to. This hardly seems like a radical idea. The neighborhood does not oppose all development; it only is requesting that plans for this site be consistent with the previously upgraded current zoning. However, the process thus far seems more focused on trying to secure a zoning increase for the developer, than demanding that he go back to the drawing board and submit a proposal that is consistent with the R-2 and R-5-B zoning. What is the point of expending time, energy, and resources on the city/neighborhood planning process, if, in the end, the developers are allowed to revise the rules to suit their narrow ends?

The developer and his assembled team obviously are very skilled at using certain buzz words (e.g., "smart development" and "community amenities") to shift the focus of this discussion away from the fundamental issue described above. It is not surprising that he has taken this tack, because less dense development

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Exhibit 53

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undoubtedly would generate considerably less profit for him. Let's not lose sight of the fact that, when all this is over, all the developer and the landowners really care about is walking away with the biggest pot of money possible; but they need the assistance of the Office of Planning and the Zoning Commission to accomplish this objective. Given their economic interest, it is not surprising that they have concluded that smaller scale development consistent with current zoning is unworkable. It also is clear that they intend to use every means at their disposal (no matter how distasteful) to accomplish their ends. Why else would one of the doctors who owns the Washington Clinic site send his staff out into the neighborhood to remove signs posted by a Friendship Heights neighborhood organization encouraging residents to attend the September 12, 2002 ANC meeting where this matter was to be discussed?

The proposed Stonebridge development is of a scale and density that is comparable to that found in nearby commercial buildings. The developer seems to believe that, on land zoned for low and moderate-density residential construction, he ought to be allowed to build a structure that would be similar in density and scale to that found on land zoned for commercial development. The Zoning Commission should disabuse him of this notion. In addition, the developer's assertions that this intense development will not adversely affect the traffic, parking, public safety, and pollution in the neighborhood insult our intelligence and belie common sense.

I respectfully request that you require the developer to provide a plan that is consistent with current zoning. The Stonebridge application for increased zoning should be rejected. It demonstrates a lack of respect for the District of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan for Ward 3, the judgment of the Zoning Board, and the Friendship Heights neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda D. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Linda D. Johnson
4114 Legation St., NW
Washington, DC 20015

Cc: Mr. Alberto Bastida