

Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association, Inc.

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October 11, 2021

Anthony J. Hood, Chairperson
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001
VIA EMAIL: zcsubmissions@dc.gov

Re: DC Zoning Commission Case No. 06-10F

Dear Chairperson Hood,

The Lamond-Riggs Citizens Association (LRCA) respectfully submits this letter in response to the second application for a Modification of Consequence submitted by the Cafritz Foundation, Applicant in Zoning Commission Case No. 06-10F, for modifications to Art Place at Fort Totten Block B (also known as the FEZ at Art Place). The LRCA does not object to Applicant's proposed modifications, but does express some concerns outlined below.

The LRCA submitted testimony in support of Block B during a public hearing in Z.C. Case No. 06-10D (Exh. 37) and provided additional post-hearing submissions regarding the matter (Z.C. Case No. 06-10D, Exhs. 47, 56). The Zoning Commission approved Block B in Z.C. Order No. 06-10D, effective March 20, 2020. The Applicant then submitted an application for a Modification of Consequence for Block B on April 4, 2020. The LRCA did not object to the proposed modifications (Z.C. Case No. 06-10E, Exh. 6). The Commission approved that requested Modification of Consequence in Z.C. Order No. 06-10E, effective September 4, 2020.

Proposed Modifications

The Applicant now comes before the Zoning Commission with a second application for a Modification of Consequence for Block B, articulating a number of revisions in its filings that we will not repeat here, largely predicated on the loss of Meow Wolf from the project. *See* Applicant's Statement in Support (Z.C. Case No. 06-10F, Exh. 2). The Applicant presented on the proposed revisions at a public meeting of the LRCA on October 4, 2021. The Applicant also presented at a public meeting of Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 5A on September 22, 2021, and at the single member district (SMD) meeting of ANC Commissioner Gordon Fletcher (5A08) on September 21, 2021.

In written communications between the Applicant, Commissioner Fletcher, residents and myself, the Applicant provided additional clarifications based on feedback and questions from residents regarding the proposed modifications.

- The Applicant indicated that there is still one individual residing at the Riggs Plaza Apartments.
- The Applicant confirmed that it is proposing to add 23 more residential units in Block B.
- The Applicant clarified that “vehicular entrance from the alley for the northern residential building has been removed as there is no longer parking underneath the northern residential building.”
- With respect to feedback about stormwater management and the problem with flooding in the area, the Applicant confirmed that all of the buildings in Block B will have green roofs.
- With respect to vehicle parking for Block B, the Applicant indicated that there will be 147 residential spaces (1 for every 2 residential units) and 347 vehicle parking spaces for commercial uses.
- With respect to feedback from residents about the need to proactively prioritize pedestrian safety, accessibility, and mobility in and around the development, the Applicant stated it is now

proposing a raised crosswalk across Ingraham Street and striped curb extensions at the intersection of Kennedy Street and 4th Street that account for the loading needs of the project and the ability to provide proper site lines to assure pedestrian safety along Kennedy Street.

- Consistent with Z.C. Order 06-10D, the Applicant indicated that it continues to engage with DC Public Library officials about accommodating parking for the Lamond-Riggs Library at the development.
- With respect to feedback about the need for a sustainable retail plan, particularly one to provide better food options in a neighborhood with no sit-down restaurants, the Applicant stated,

The Applicant is convinced that the Food Hall concept in Block B will allow for significant opportunities for quality dining options. The Food Hall concept allows “up and coming” chefs/restauranteurs opportunities that may not be available in established restaurant spaces. The Applicant is hopeful that with the opening of the fitness operator in Block A and the general levels of vaccine acceptance in the area, retail leasing will pick up.

- With respect to feedback about the need to approach this project as one that is a part of an existing, established neighborhood in Riggs Park, the Applicant stated,

We agree. We want the Art Place at Fort Totten to be a dynamic and exciting part of the Riggs Park community. The Applicant believes that the development of Block B, as proposed in this Modification of Consequence application, is a crucial component to making that vision a reality.

Extension of 3rd Street NE

Residents also learned at the ANC 5A meeting on September 22, 2021, that the Applicant has been in communication with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for approximately one year regarding opening 3rd Street NE between Ingraham Street NE and Kennedy Street NE to vehicles. The Zoning order in this matter requires the Applicant to “improve pedestrian infrastructure of 3rd Street, N.E. by providing a new concrete 6-foot wide standard sidewalk, as well as an 8-foot-wide asphalt bicycle lane, as shown on Exhibit 44E of the record.” (Z.C. Order No. 06-10D, p. 34)

By chance, residents learned that DDOT recently approved a permit for the Applicant to extend 3rd Street between Ingraham and Kennedy with two travel lanes for vehicles (one in each direction), sidewalks on both sides of the street, and no bike lanes. Neither DDOT nor the Applicant informed the ANC or LRCA of this plan. It is LRCA’s understanding that this work is being done at the request of DDOT. The LRCA makes the following requests.

- Consistent with LRCA’s testimony in Z.C. Case No. 06-10D, LRCA requests that the Applicant keep LRCA and the community apprised of all developments regarding Art Place at Fort Totten.
- The LRCA requests that any work done by the Applicant on 3rd Street prioritize pedestrian/bike safety, accessibility, and mobility. Specifically, the Applicant should seek to minimize conflicts between pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles and to slow down cars. Safety/traffic calming features and signage should be installed as part of road construction so that they are in place *before* the road is open to vehicles. This is critical. Our experience is that safety and traffic calming features are quite difficult to add to roads after they are built due to processes and practices of DDOT.
- To the extent opening 3rd Street for continuous vehicle travel affects the Applicant’s transportation analysis, the LRCA requests that the Applicant update the transportation analysis as part of the record in this matter.
- If 3rd Street is indeed going to be extended, there should be an updated plan in place to address safe school dropoff/pickup and parking. This road is adjacent to three schools (Rocketship Infinity Community Prep Public Charter School, AppleTree at Rocketship Infinity, and Social Justice Public Charter School) that share a campus at 5450 3rd Street NE under a long-term lease that Rocketship has with the Applicant. Students in grades pre-K through eight attend school at the campus. All of the schools began in-person instruction at the campus for the first time in fall 2021 and they have a school dropoff/pickup plan premised on the fact that vehicles cannot travel on 3rd Street between Ingraham and Kennedy. That plan should be updated to account for vehicle travel on 3rd Street. Likewise, plans for parking restrictions/enforcement also should be addressed.
- The LRCA requests that a rendering of 3rd Street, showing the proposed changes and any safety features, be added to the record in this matter.

Satisfy Conditions of Z.C. Order No. 06-10D

The LRCA stands by its full testimony in support of Block B during Z.C. Case No. 06-10D, encourages the Applicant to continue to be mindful of the concerns and guiding principles outlined in that testimony, and requests that the Applicant satisfy all of the conditions in Z.C.

Order Nos. 06-10D and 06-10E. The LRCA previously requested that the Applicant work with the community to offer free or reduced admission to the offerings in Block B (Z.C. Case No. 06-10D, Exh. 37, p. 7). This request was made with respect to all offerings in the project that will charge an admission fee, not just with respect to one particular tenant. Zoning Commission Order No. 06-10D requires the Applicant to proffer evidence of discounted admissions to Meow Wolf and the children's museum prior to receipt of a certificate of occupancy (Z.C. Order No. 06-10D, p. 35). With Meow Wolf no longer part of this project, the LRCA repeats its request that the Applicant work to provide free or discounted admission for community residents to venues within Block B.

The LRCA also continues to encourage the Applicant to work with the community to provide opportunities for local hiring in the project.

And finally, the LRCA continues to encourage the Applicant to pursue parking accommodation for the Lamond-Riggs Library in the project.

Conclusion

The LRCA looks forward to continued collaboration with the Applicant to ensure that this project is thoughtfully designed, prioritizes pedestrian safety and mobility, and is well-integrated into the Riggs Park community.

Respectfully submitted,



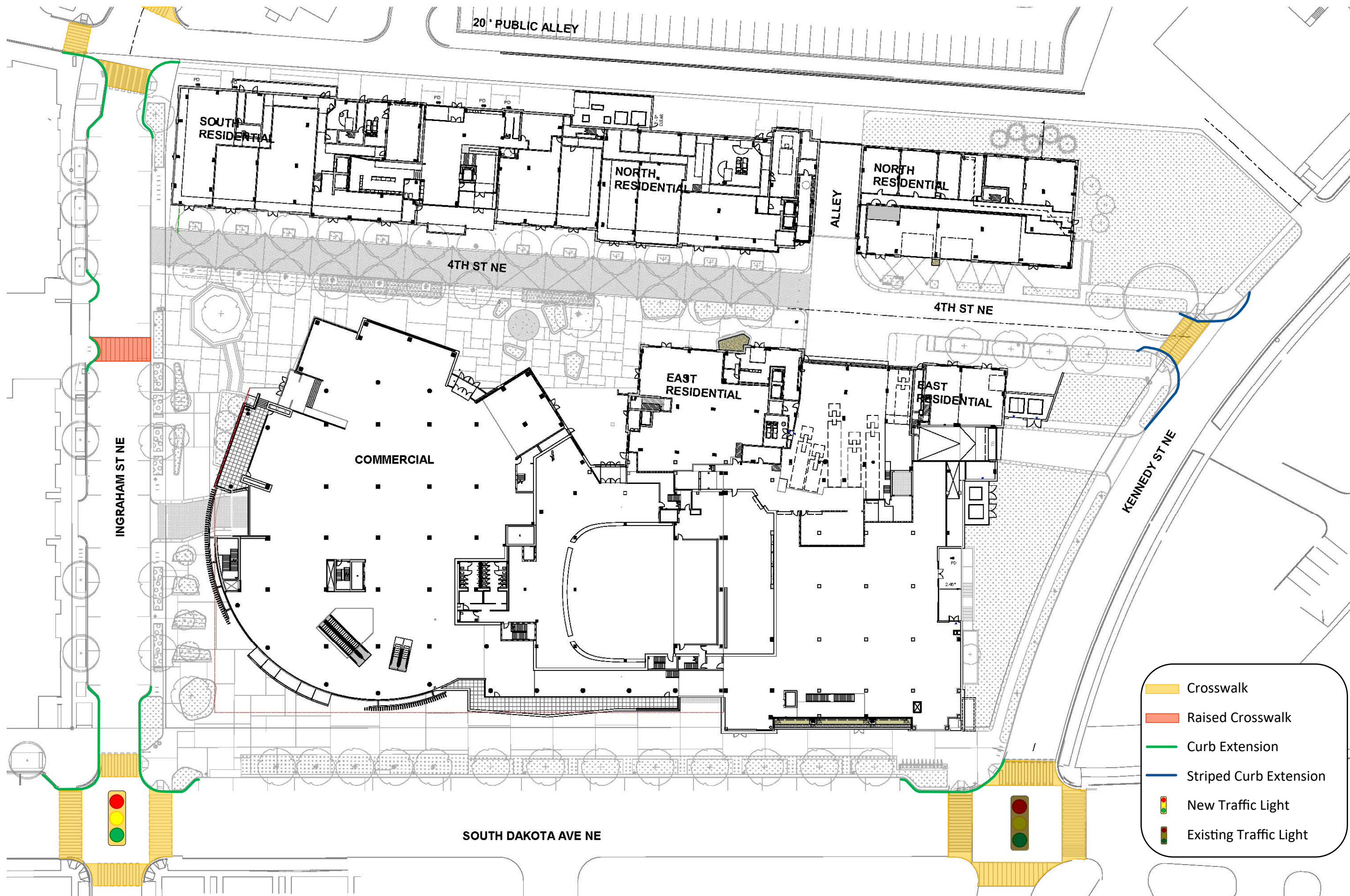
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-  Crosswalk
-  Raised Crosswalk
-  Curb Extension
-  Striped Curb Extension
-  New Traffic Light
-  Existing Traffic Light