

--Testimony of Ellen Bass in Support of Zoning Case No. 16-26 --

Application of Wisconsin Owner LLC

for Approval of a Consolidated PUD and Map Amendment

for Property on Wisconsin Avenue, NW in Tenleytown

September 28, 2017

Chairman Hood & Members of the Zoning Commission:

I am Ellen Bass, and I live in the 3600 block of Cumberland St., NW. I have lived in this area for almost 35 years. I support this PUD proposal before the Commission in the 4600 block of Wisconsin Avenue, NW, in Tenleytown.

I often go to Tenleytown to shop, eat, to use the Metro and for other purposes. I think this mixed-use building along a major transit and commercial corridor -- Wisconsin Avenue -- would be a positive and wholly appropriate development. This is particularly true because the site is just two blocks from the Tenley Metro Station. We need to make public transit use as convenient as possible for more people, to lessen vehicle congestion and the related environmental problems. We need more amenities, like the restaurant and other retail the project envisions, and we can't realistically support these without more residential density. This is an urban area, and we need to develop it as such. The building proposed does that. Sadly, the current buildings which would be redeveloped under this PUD are now largely empty and contribute very little to the area's vibrancy and aesthetics. They are certainly not welcoming for a resident like me.

Five years ago in 2012, I testified before this Commission in favor of the PUD for the building next door to this one, which was then called "Babes" and now is Tenley View at 4600 Wisconsin Ave. (ZC Case No. 10-23). The mixed-use building that was built there after this Commission approved that PUD by order dated February 25, 2013, has several eateries, a gym and a water feature outside. These are very positive amenities for the location. It is a distinct improvement over the empty building there before. I think it justifies my support and that of this Commission. The predictions of doom from opponents did not materialize. The proposed project which is before you now meets the same criteria and justifies the Commission's support again. The Commission should look to its decision in that case as support for, among other things, why this project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, which is discussed in detail therein.

The height of the proposed PUD (about 88 feet, 8 stories) is appropriate for the location, and will be in scale with the Tenley View building, which is almost the same height. It will fit in with the apartment and commercial buildings nearby. I really think that the difference in height over a matter-of-right building will not be noticeable from the street or materially affect that residents behind it, given that there are multi-story buildings there now. And the other aspects of the PUD proposal militate in its favor. We get more residents to grow the tax base and shop here, more affordable units and more amenities with the PUD than with a matter-of-right project. I am particularly pleased that the developer is proposing to offer more affordable units than the Inclusionary Zoning regulations require. This would be a big win for expensive Ward 3.

I urge you to approve this PUD as soon as possible.

Submitted on 9/26/2017 by:

Testimony of Ellen Bass

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