

To: Office of Zoning
Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia

From: Pennsylvania Avenue East Economic Development Committee
Stephen Downing, Chair

Notice of Public Hearing, Monday, October 2, 2017 @ 6:30pm
Jerry R. Kress Memorial Hearing Room
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 220, Washington, DC 20002

Re: Case No.17-11 (3200 Penn Ave PJV, LLC – Map Amendment @ Square 5539, Lots 835, 383, 839, and 840)

The Pennsylvania Avenue East Economic Development Committee submits written testimony to support the petition submitted by 3200 Penn Ave PJV, LLC seeking a map amendment to rezone the Property from MU-3/R-1-B to MU-4 to make it consistent with the Low-Density Commercial land use designation of the Comprehensive Plan. The general purpose of MU zones is, among other things, to provide for mixed-use developments that permit a broad range of uses at varying densities consisting of housing, shopping, and business needs, including residential, office, service, and employment centers. The MU-4 zone is intended to be located in low-to moderate-density residential areas with access to main roadways or rapid transit stops, and permit mixed-use development providing facilities for shopping, office, and housing. As a matter-of-right, the MU-4 zone permits a maximum building height of 50 feet; a maximum density of 2.5 FAR (3.0 FAR with Inclusionary Zoning) of which no more than 1.5 FAR can be devoted to non-residential uses; and a maximum permitted lot occupancy of 60% for residential uses (75% with Inclusionary Zoning).

Our committee was formed in 2016 to focus on sustainable development of the Pennsylvania Ave East corridor and consists of members from every neighboring community (Hillcrest, Penn Branch, Dupont Park, Fairfax Village, and Fort Dupont Park) that touches Pennsylvania Ave. The property at 3200 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE was our first focus since it is the biggest and most visible opportunity to bring long overdue development and revitalization to our community. The property which is located at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and Branch Avenue in southeast Washington, DC, previously known as the Penn Branch Shopping Center and now rebranded by owner Jair Lynch as Penn Hill is conveniently situated close to prime areas of the city including Capitol Hill and Downtown. The shopping center has a variety of underutilized retail and office space and only attracts a portion of the significant foot traffic from neighborhood residents and daily commuters that stands to be realized with a remaking of the site. The more than 50-year-old development is in crucial need of repair and updating. In its current state it woefully lacks amenities the community has voiced that it desires.

In 2008 the Pennsylvania Avenue SE Corridor Land Development Plan (Small Area Development Plan), a product of an 18-month public planning process initiated in September 2006 by the Office of Planning, in collaboration with residents, community stakeholders, and District government agencies, to develop a coordinated and comprehensive revitalization strategy for the Pennsylvania Avenue SE corridor, was approved by the City Council. Penn Hill was identified as the prime opportunity site along the corridor identified for strategic redevelopment due to its

potential to act as catalyzing anchor that could leverage expanded transit and mobility options, inject diversified housing choices, new highly desirable retail, and design that would improve pedestrian and vehicle safety. Unfortunately for the community, no action was ever taken by the City Council to implement the plan regarding the Shopping Center. It should be noted that the petition presented by the owner of Penn Hill is in compliance with the Small Area Development Plan and the community has been waiting for years for redevelopment of this shopping center.

It is past time for action.

We believe that the changes proposed in the petition will:

1. Promote mixed used housing
2. Create opportunities through jobs, education, training and human services
3. Create a community anchor (recreational space, store, restaurant)
4. Create a much desired community gathering space accessible by all neighborhood residents, that's visible from Pennsylvania Avenue
5. Improve access to amenities common to other developed neighborhoods across the city
6. Build an attractive, welcoming shopping center for the neighborhood
7. Increase value from new economic development in the community
8. Provide much needed and long sought after retail to the area, providing convenience for area residents where it is sorely lacking.

The District of Columbia has experienced a revitalization that has been evident in many parts of the city; however, the once vibrant stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue East has not kept pace with the rest of the city. The petition submitted by the owners of Penn Hill starts the process to give our DC Income and Property Tax paying residents who live along the Pennsylvania Avenue East corridor equal or similar amenities which they are entitled to and that are enjoyed by DC residents in other areas of the city.

We recommend that the Commission approves the petition so our neighborhoods can see the remaking of a neighborhood hub and begin to enjoy the benefits of economic development occurring elsewhere across the city.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Stephen Downing, Chair

Pennsylvania Avenue East Economic Development Committee

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