

**Public Testimony**  
**Zoning Hearing: CASE NO. 17-21: As You Like It**  
**For 501 I Street S.W. (Sq. 498, Lot 52)**  
**March 28, 2019**

**Lauren Stocker, PTA Member, Amidon-Bowen Elementary School**

Thank you for your time this evening and for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Amidon-Bowen PTA. I'm Lauren Stocker, a PTA member and neighbor to 501 I Street.

I'm here tonight representing the PTA because we care deeply about the quality of life of our students and their teachers and how this development will impact them. I'd like to start by acknowledging that the Amidon-Bowen PTA recognizes that this parcel of land was always going to be redeveloped. We are not the only group here tonight that had hoped for more townhomes to be built on this lot to house families that might add to our school and neighborhood community. But that is not what is currently planned for the site, and we have several major concerns which we've been working with the Erkiletian Development Company and Shakespeare Theatre Company to address.

The first of those concerns is safety. With the addition of condos and actor apartments, office space and rehearsal space in the current building plan, there will be an increase of traffic in the heart of where our children and their siblings walk to and from school. In addition, the building entrance is planned for I Street, steps away from the playground and where many parents park to drop off their children. There have now been near misses of a parent and their child crossing at 6th & I and at 4th & M. Both parents were almost struck. It is critical that we have time to finalize the traffic mitigation plan. We are close to an agreement, but it should be noted that DDOT appears to be the challenge. We urge DDOT to continue work with the developer, ANC and include the PTA in conversations so we can have a plan to keep our kids safe in what is becoming a much busier area.

Our second concern is the impact to our outdoor play areas. Simply put, we want our students to be able to play outside in the sun after 3pm. The outdoor play areas are also used by the community after school hours and on the weekends. No other Ward 6 DCPS Elementary School playgrounds have a tall development directly adjacent to their playgrounds. Some schools have townhomes or very low rise buildings near them, but in each case there is a separating alley or road. The Commission will have to decide if this elementary school will be the exception to the rule.

Our third concern is the impact to our diverse and family-centric Southwest community. That's what makes our quadrant so special. Zoning was designed with intention and the intentional zoning of Southwest has created the warm and charming urban neighborhood that our parents and children call home. We want to keep it that way and have urged Erkiletian and the Shakespeare Theatre Company to include larger and affordable condo units that are conducive to families seeking to own homes. The current plan includes this and if the Commission moves forward on approving this PUD we strongly encourage that these larger, affordable units remain in the design.

Until recently, the Amidon-Bowen PTA had not had the opportunity to sit-down with Erkiletian and the Shakespeare Theatre Company to engage in a meaningful dialogue. While agreements have been reached with other community groups, the PTA was late to the table. That said, we appreciate the time that everyone has committed over the past few weeks to listen to our concerns and come up with solutions. This includes incorporating the school into further renderings, extending the shadow study to 6:00pm, committing to move the light pole onto Amidon-Bowen property so it can light the soccer field, revising construction management plans, commitments to traffic mitigation during and after construction, including three bedrooms at below-market rate, and starting a conversation around benefits for Amidon-Bowen, which would be managed through the Amidon-Bowen PTA.

One brief note in regard to community benefits, we recognize the Commission is changing how community benefits are done. While we appreciate that, we hope that the Commission will also take into consideration our school's need. For example, this past year alone the PTA has provided support to two separate families when a parent was lost to gun violence, provided an opportunity for the first time for our third grade class to visit the Baltimore Aquarium and numerous scholarships so children could take part in after school activities like karate, dance, Spanish and soccer. While these things may not be immediately shovel ready, we hope the Commission will take into consideration the vast and differing needs of our school community and will help the PTA provide these crucial benefits as part of this agreement.

We look forward to further conversations with Erkiletian and STC in the coming weeks to finalize an agreement. As such, the Amidon-Bowen PTA is testifying as undeclared. Thank you for your time.