

Louis Eby
4415 15th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20011

May 3, 2022

Re: Letter of Opposition to Square 2704 Development/Dance Loft, LLC + Heleos (ZC Case #21-18)

Dear Members of the Zoning Commission:

If you do approve this, may I suggest that you have the courtesy to personally thank the neighbors whose property and happiness is being sacrificed to help pay for this development. While they might not all be making that sacrifice willingly, that does not stop us from thanking and honoring military draftees who are compelled to make sacrifices. We owe the neighbors no less.

Please do not approve this application without personally viewing the project site. If you do, I believe you will agree that the proposed height is clearly inappropriate for the site and would impose unacceptable project impacts on the residents of the neighboring RF-1 zone. Take note of the applicant's Exhibit K "Analysis of Project's Potential Impacts" which focuses on the impacts on the 14th Street commercial corridor while ignoring the residences on the other 3 sides of the project.

The property's current MU-3A zoning is a historical accident resulting from the golden age of movie palaces. It already provides for significant development of this property. To upzone to MU-5A clearly imposes unacceptable impacts on the RF-1 neighbors.

The applicants ask that you take something of value from the current neighbors (the protections of the current zoning) and give it as a subsidy to this project. The Zoning Commission essentially is being asked to force the adjacent property neighbors to subsidize public benefits because the taxpayers and their representatives are unwilling to pay for those benefits.

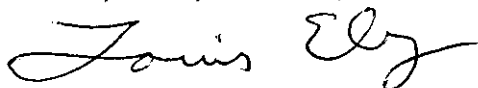
Essential to the applicant's case is its assertion that it needs the zoning changes because these benefits cannot pay for themselves. Where's the proof? When I first heard the proposal, my reaction was that it was so clearly inappropriate that surely it was just their initial negotiating position. Did they really start this process with their bottom line? I suspect that the developers are stunned that their proposal is going to be approved without any real compromise.

Everybody wants affordable housing, but apparently their elected representatives are unwilling to pay for it. Instead of openly paying for these benefits, banking laws are tweaked to encourage the banks to make loans, tax credits are provided to investors for off budget support, and zoning variances are granted that don't impose costs on anyone, no one that is except for the neighbors that the original zoning was intended to protect. And presto, we get affordable housing units without having to pay for them. But, of course, someone pays.

Can't we have affordable housing that doesn't involve packing affordable units into an inappropriately scaled building? Is the only way to get affordable housing by granting height variances so we can pack poorer people into too high buildings? Pause to think how sad that is and what it says about us as a society.

Please go look at the site. And if you're going to approve this, meet with the neighbors and thank them for their sacrifice.

Thank you for your service,



Louis Eby