

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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FOREIGN MISSIONS BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

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REGULAR PUBLIC HEARING

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WEDNESDAY

JANUARY 21, 2026

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The Regular Public Hearing of the District of Columbia Foreign Missions Board of Zoning Adjustment convened via Videoconference, pursuant to notice at 9:30 a.m. EST, Carl Blake, Chairperson, presiding.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT MEMBERS PRESENT:

CARL BLAKE, Chairperson

FOREIGN MISSIONS BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT MEMBERS PRESENT:

MARCEL ACOSTA, NCPC Designee
TAMMY STIDHAM, NPS Designee

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

KEARA MEHLERT, Secretary

The transcript constitutes the minutes from the Regular Public Hearing held on January 21, 2026.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(12:01 p.m.)

CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. This is January 21, 2026 Public Hearing of the Board of Zoning Adjustment of the District of Columbia, convened to act on a chancery application pursuant to the Foreign Missions Act and Subtitle X, Chapter 2 of the Zoning Regulations.

My name is Carl Blake, Chairman. Joining me today are federal representatives Marcel Acosta, the Executive Director representing the National Capital Planning Commission, and Tammy Stidham, representing the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior.

Today's meeting and agenda are available on the Office of Zoning's website. Please be advised that this proceeding is being recorded by a court reporter and is also webcast live via WebEx and YouTube Live.

The video of the webcast will be available on the Office of Zoning's website after today's hearing.

Accordingly, everyone listening to WebEx or via telephone will be muted during the hearing so as to not pick up sound or background noise. If you experience difficulty accessing WebEx or your telephone call-in, please call our OZ hotline number at 202-727-5471 to receive WebEx login or call-in instructions.

1 The District of Columbia Administrative
2 Procedures Act requires that a public hearing in each
3 case be held in the open before the public. Pursuant
4 to sections 405(b) and 406 of the Act. The Board may,
5 consistent with its rules and procedures and the Act,
6 enter into a closed meeting on a case purposes -- legal
7 counsel on case, pursuant to D.C. Official Code Section
8 2-575(b)4(a), and/or deliberate on a case pursuant to
9 D.C. Official Code Section 2-575(b)13, but only after
10 providing necessary public notice, and in the case of
11 an emergency closed meeting, after taking a roll call
12 vote.

13 Madam Secretary, do we have any preliminary
14 matters?

15 MS. MEHLERT: We do not.

16 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay. All right. I
17 will hope that the Applicant is listening; I suspect
18 they are. We have a preliminary matter --

19 MS. MEHLERT: Mr. Chair, did you want me to
20 read into the -- read the case in?

21 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Would you, please? I'm
22 sorry.

23 MS. MEHLERT: No worries. So, within the
24 FMBZA hearing, next is Application No. 21252A of the
25 Embassy of the Republic of Cuba. This is a request

1 pursuant to Subtitle Y, Section 703, for a modification
2 without hearing, the order not disapproving.

3 Application No. 21252, issued on April 8, 2025,
4 regarding the description of a trash enclosure access
5 and a new security fence. Project is located in RA-2
6 and RA-4 zones at 2630 16th Street, NW, Square 2575,
7 Lot 843.

8 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay. As I said, I'm
9 hoping that the Applicant is listening, which I'm pretty
10 sure they are.

11 As a preliminary matter, I need to address
12 before we get into the merits. This is a jurisdictional
13 issue that we need to address. The Applicant's request
14 was filed under Subtitle Y, Section 703.

15 Unfortunately, the Board lacks jurisdiction to review
16 the application solely under D.C. law. This is not a
17 normal zoning application; this is a request that
18 involves a chancery application.

19 The Zoning Regulations state that the Board's
20 determination of the merits of all chancery applications
21 shall be based solely on the criteria -- the six criteria
22 specified in the Foreign Missions Act. So we're going
23 to treat this as a Foreign Missions rulemaking. I
24 believe appropriate notices have been published. I
25 think the FMA requires the appropriate opportunities

1 for participation by the public in the proceedings
2 pertaining to the location, placement, and expansion
3 of chanceries. We have had comments that have been
4 provided by the public from the ANC. Applications,
5 though, are typically accompanied by a letter from the
6 State Department certifying the Applicant has complied
7 with section 205 of the Foreign Missions Act.

8 Unfortunately, we don't have that. So, the
9 request for modification was sent to the State
10 Department, but the State Department has not yet
11 submitted anything to the record. So, given the fact
12 that a filed determination of the application must be
13 made within six months of the date of filing. I don't
14 want to drag this out, but I would like to give State
15 Department a little more time to weigh in.

16 So, if the Board is comfortable, we could
17 postpone this decision for a few weeks. I would like
18 to see what the Board thinks about that.

19 MR. ACOSTA: I'm fine with that, Mr. Chairman.

20 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay.

21 MS. STIDHAM: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Mr. Acosta, say again?

23 MR. ACOSTA: I'm fine with this, Mr. Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay. Thank you so much.

25 MS. STIDHAM: I am as well.

1 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay, great. Thank you.
2 Okay, then let's -- Madam Secretary, can you give me
3 a date, late February, early March to fit with Mr.
4 Costa's and Ms. Stidham's schedule.

5 MS. MEHLERT: We could put this on the March
6 4th meeting agenda.

7 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay. Would -- does
8 March 4th work for both of you?

9 MR. ACOSTA: Yes, it does.

10 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: That's a yes. Okay,
11 great. We will put this on for a decision meeting, as
12 the information does not appear to require a hearing,
13 only the appropriate opportunity for participation.
14 The Board's rules do allow for modification, so we will
15 have this as a decision meeting on March 4th.

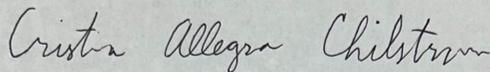
16 MR. ACOSTA: Thank you.

17 MS. STIDHAM: Thank you.

18 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
19 off the record at 12:07 p.m.)
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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 This is to certify that the foregoing transcript was
3 duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my
4 direction; further, that said transcript is a true and
5 accurate record of the proceedings; and that I am neither
6 counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the
7 parties to this action in which this matter was taken;
8 and further that I am not a relative nor an employee
9 of any of the parties nor counsel employed by the
10 parties, and I am not financially or otherwise
11 interested in the outcome of the action.

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18 Cristina Allegra Chilstrom