

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

+ + + + +

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

+ + + + +

REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY

MARCH 4, 2026

+ + + + +

The Regular Public Meeting of the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment convened via Video Teleconference, pursuant to notice at 11:04 a.m. EST, Carl Blake, Chairperson, presiding.

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT MEMBERS PRESENT:

CARL BLAKE, Chairperson
MARCEL ACOSTA, NCPC Designee

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBER[S] PRESENT:

TAMMY STIDHAM, NPS Designee

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

KEARA MEHLERT, Secretary
PAUL YOUNG, A/V Production Specialist

The transcript constitutes the minutes from the Regular Public Meeting held on March 4, 2026.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

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

(11:04 a.m.)

CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay, Mr. Young, would you please begin the recording?

Okay, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is March 4th, 2026, public hearing of the Board of Zoning Adjustment and District of Columbia, convening to act on a chancellery 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, the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Today's meeting agenda is 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.

Recording everyone who is listening on WebEx or by telephone will be muted during the

1 hearing so long as not to pick up sound or
2 background noise. If you experience difficulty
3 accessing WebEx or with your telephone call-in, then
4 please call our OZ Hotline number at 202-727-5471 to
5 receive WebEx login or call-in instructions. The
6 District of Columbia Procedure Act requires that the
7 public hearing on each case be held in the open
8 before the public.

9 Pursuant to Sections 505B and 6 of that
10 Act, the Board may, consistent with its Rules of
11 Procedure and the Act, enter into closed meeting on
12 a case for purposes of seeking legal counsel on a
13 case pursuant to D.C. Official Code Section 2-575B4A
14 and or deliberating on a case pursuant to D.C.
15 Official Code Section 2-575B13, but only after
16 providing the necessary public notice and in the
17 case of an emergency closed meeting after taking a
18 roll call vote.

19 Madam Secretary, do you have any
20 preliminary matters?

21 MS. MEHLERT: Good morning, Chairman Blake,
22 Mr. Acosta, Commissioner Stidham. There are a few
23 announcements regarding today's schedule.
24 Application numer 21432 of Hassan Dasal has been
25 administratively rescheduled to the public meeting

1 on March 11, 2026.

2 Also, all hearing applications that were
3 originally scheduled for today have been
4 administratively rescheduled to April 22, 2026. And
5 I'll also note that applications scheduled through
6 the April 8th hearing have also been
7 administratively rescheduled and those new dates
8 have been updated in the calendar on the Office of
9 Zoning website as well as the specific case records
10 in ISIS. Other than that, there are no other
11 preliminary matters for today.

12 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay, thank you. Then
13 would you please call our first meeting session
14 item?

15 MS. MEHLERT: Yes, this is application
16 number 21252A of the Embassy of the Republic of
17 Cuba. This is a request pursuant to subtitle Y703
18 for modification without hearing of the order not
19 disapproving application number 21252 issued on
20 April 8, 2025 with respect to access to a trash
21 enclosure, access description of a new security
22 fence.

23 The original application was for a new
24 security fence requiring grating and a retaining
25 wall and improvements to an existing enclosure for

1 trash containers and a new emergency generator and
2 an existing chancery. The project is located in the
3 RA2 and RA4 zones at 2630 16th Street Northwest,
4 square 2575, lot 843.

5 At the January 21st meeting, the Board
6 continued the matter to allow time for a submission
7 from the State Department, which has been submitted
8 in Exhibit 17, and participating are Chair Blake,
9 Commissioner Acosta, and Commissioner Stidham.

10 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay, thank you very
11 much, Madam Secretary.

12 I'm just going to go through a little bit
13 of background and then review, kind of give you my
14 thoughts and deliberations. The Board voted on
15 March 12th not to disapprove application, and that's
16 March 12, 2025, not to disapprove application 21252.

17 The application basically addressed, as the
18 Secretary pointed out, a new security fence
19 requiring grating and a retaining wall and
20 improvements to an existing enclosure for trash
21 containers and a new emergency generator at the rear
22 of the subject property. The applicant later
23 identified an inaccuracy in the description of the
24 trash enclosure access and the fencing, as stated in
25 the order. So before us today is a request to

1 modify that decision.

2 Specifically, the modification clarifies
3 that the enclosure will be accessible from Mozart
4 Place via an opaque gate without a ramp providing
5 street access for a vehicle, and the enclosure will
6 be bound by a wrought iron fence eight feet high and
7 not opaque, as shown in the plans, the approved
8 plans in the order.

9 The Board is authorized, the Board's review
10 and determination of the original application and
11 this modification request must be based solely on
12 the six criteria enumerated in Section 206d of the
13 Foreign Missions Act and D.C. Official Code Section
14 6-1306d.

15 The Board considers several factors for
16 foreign missions, including the United States
17 international obligations to provide adequate and
18 secure embassy facilities and compatibility with
19 historic preservation requirements.

20 It also evaluates parking and transit
21 access, subject to any security requirements
22 identified by the Secretary of State. Finally, the
23 Secretary of State determines protection capability
24 and federal interests, while the mayor determines
25 the municipal interests. So based on the evidence

1 in the record, I believe that the modification
2 request or the criteria for the modification have
3 been met.

4 First, the State Department by letter dated
5 September, I think February 13, 2026, which is in
6 Exhibit 17. The Department of State determined that
7 favorable action on the modification would help
8 fulfill the United States international obligation
9 to facilitate adequate and ensure premises for the
10 Cuban embassy.

11 The department further concluded that there
12 were no special security related parking
13 requirements and that after consultation with
14 federal protective agencies, the site and the
15 surrounding area can be adequately protected.
16 The letter also notes a federal interest in the
17 project, citing Cuba's cooperation in enabling
18 zoning and permitting needed for security
19 improvements for the US embassies in Havana.

20 In Exhibits 4, 5, and 6, the applicant
21 provided written correspondence with HPO staff that
22 clarified the intent of HPO's prior recommendations
23 by confirming that a gate providing access for
24 collection personnel, personnel limited to rolling
25 trash containers to a truck or Mozart Place is

1 consistent with the Meridian Hill historic district
2 design guidelines. In Exhibit 13, ANC 1A indicated
3 its support for requested modification stating that
4 it had no, it raised no concerns.

5 In Exhibit 11, the Office of Planning
6 recommended approval of the requested modification
7 in which OP noted it would not alter the location,
8 function, or design of the enclosure as originally
9 approved or involve any substantive redesign or
10 alteration views.

11 The Office of Planning also proposed a
12 revision to the order to accomplish the modification
13 to make the following revision to the second
14 paragraph in the second section, which is entitled
15 Proposed Expansion on page two of the prior order.

16 The enclosure will be located at the
17 southwest corner of the subject property, 22 feet
18 wide and accessible from the interior of the lot for
19 Mozart Place via a gate that will allow waste
20 collection personnel to roll containers to trucks on
21 Mozart Place and return them to the enclosure.

22 The enclosure will be bound by a wrought iron fence
23 eight feet high and a gate to ensure, and the gate
24 to the enclosure will be opaque.

25 So I believe that this revision is

1 reasonable and recommend its inclusion. As I said
2 before, I believe the criteria for the requested
3 modification has been met and I'll be voting in
4 favor of the request.

5 Let's see. Mr. Acosta, what are your
6 thoughts?

7 BOARD MEMBER ACOSTA: Thank you, Chair
8 Blake. Yes, I would agree with you that the six
9 criteria for determinations have been met by the
10 applicant. Again, this is a technical change, our
11 amendment to reflect the actual screening that will
12 be used at the site.

13 And given the fact that we did recently
14 receive the Department of State's testimony
15 regarding the federal interest, I believe all the
16 information that we have is now in place and I am
17 also inclined to not disapprove this application.

18 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Thank you very much.
19 Commissioner Stidham?

20 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I agree with the
21 remarks from both of you. I think they've met the
22 requirements. It's really just a clarification or
23 correction and prepared to support.

24 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Thank you. Okay, then
25 I will make a motion to not disapprove the request

1 for modification of the order not disapproving
2 application number 21252 and incorporate the revised
3 text in exhibit number 11 and ask for a second. Mr.
4 Acosta?

5 BOARD MEMBER ACOSTA: I second, Mr. Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Thank you.

7 Madam Secretary, motion is made and
8 seconded. Would you please conduct a roll call
9 vote?

10 MS. MEHLERT: Please respond to the Chair's
11 motion to not disapprove the application.

12 Chairman Blake?

13 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Yes, to not disapprove.

14 MS. MEHLERT: Mr. Acosta?

15 BOARD MEMBER ACOSTA: Yes, to not
16 disapprove.

17 MS. MEHLERT: Commissioner Stidham?

18 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes, to not
19 disapprove.

20 MS. MEHLERT: Staff would record the vote
21 as three to zero to two to not disapprove
22 application number 21252A on the motion made by
23 Chairman Blake and seconded by Mr. Acosta.

24 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay, Madam Secretary,
25 do you have any other matters?

1 MS. MEHLERT: There is nothing else for
2 today.

3 CHAIRPERSON BLAKE: Okay, thank you very
4 much.

5 Thank you, Mr. Acosta. Thank you,
6 Commissioner.
7 Have a good day.

8 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
9 off the record at 11:15 a.m.)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

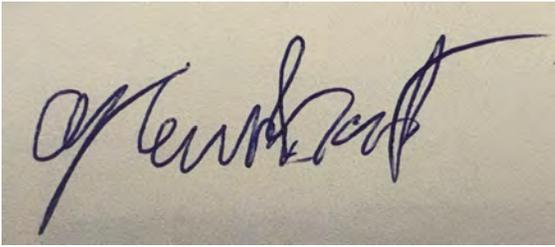
23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

1
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
5 and accurate record of the proceedings; and that I
6 am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by
7 any of the parties to this action in which this
8 matter was taken; and further that I am not a
9 relative nor an employee of any of the parties nor
10 counsel employed by the parties, and I am not
11 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome
12 of the action.

13
14
15 A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Ashby Everhart'.

16
17
18
19 Ashby Everhart