

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ZONING COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday
September 25, 1997

Washington, D.C.

The public hearing was held in Room 220,
441 Fourth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. at 7:00
p.m., Jerrily R. Kress, Vice Chairperson, presiding.

PRESENT:

JERRILY R. KRESS	Vice Chairperson
HERBERT M. FRANKLIN	Member
JOHN G. PARSONS	Member

WITNESSES:

Madeliene H. Dobbins

Alberto Bastido

Richard Nero

Andree Gandy

Serita Sanders

Andrew Bryant

Jeannette McLemore

Robert L. Morris

Laurester Haynesworth

Robert Brannum

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

2 7:20 p.m.

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Good evening
4 ladies and gentlemen. I'm Jerrily Kress, Vice
5 Chairperson of the Zoning Commission for the
6 District of Columbia. Joining me this evening are
7 Commissioners Franklin and Parsons. I declare this
8 hearing open.

9 The case of the subject of this hearing
10 is Case No. 97-4 an application from the People's
11 Involvement Corporation and the District of
12 Columbia, Department of Administrative Services,
13 requesting the Zoning Commission to approve a change
14 of zoning from R-4 to R-5B for Lot 800, Square 3115,
15 for property known as the Gage School, located at
16 2035 Second Street, N.W.

17 The Applicants requesting the Commission
18 to re-zone a subject property from R-4 to R-5B to
19 conform the site's zoning to the comprehensive plan
20 generalized land use designation of moderate density
21 residential and to allow for the renovation of the
22 Gage School building into affordable housing for
23 elderly and moderate income residence.

24 This continued hearing will be conducted
25 in accordance with the provisions of DCMR 3022. The
26 order of procedure will be as follows, One,
27 preliminary matters. Two, the Applicant's case.
28 Three, the report of the Office of Planning. Four,

1 report of other agencies.

2 Five, report of the advising
3 neighborhood commission, 5-C. Six, parties in
4 support. Seven, persons in support.
5 Eight, parties in opposition. Nine, persons in
6 opposition. The Commission will adhere to this
7 schedule as strictly as possible.

8 Those presenting testimony should be
9 brief and non-repetitive. If you have prepared a
10 statement, give copies to staff and orally summarize
11 the highlights. Each individual appearing before
12 the Commission must complete two identification
13 slips and give them to the Reporter before making a
14 statement.

15 If these guidelines are followed, an
16 adequate record can be developed in a reasonable
17 length of time. The decision of this Commission in
18 this contested case must be based exclusively on the
19 public record. To avoid any appearance to the
20 contrary, the Commission requests that parties,
21 Council and witnesses not engage the members of the
22 Commission in conversation during any recess or at
23 the conclusion of the hearing session.

24 While the intended conversation may be
25 entirely unrelated to the case that is before the
26 Commission, other persons may not recognize that the
27 discussion is not about the case. The staff will be
28 available to discuss procedural questions. All

1 individuals who wish to testify and who were not
2 previously sworn, please rise to take the oath.

3 (Whereupon, the witnesses were
4 sworn.)

5 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: First is
6 preliminary matters.

7 MS. DOBBINS: Good evening, Madam
8 Chairman and members of the Commission. I have the
9 Affidavit of Maintenance of Posting for the
10 properties involved in this application and it is in
11 order. In addition, you have in front of you three
12 items that were submitted today.

13 You have an A&C Report. You have the
14 Ledroit Park Civic Association's letter and that of
15 the Bloomingdale Civic Association. And they are
16 all in support. And those were not in your pocket.
17 And I have no other preliminary matters.

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: All right,
19 thank you. We will move to the Applicant's case.

20 MR. NERO: Good evening.

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Good evening.

22 MR. NERO: I'm Rick Nero, Urban Planner
23 with the law firm of Wilkes, Artis, Hedrick and
24 Lane. I am here this evening along with
25 representatives of the People's Involvement
26 Corporation, the Applicant in this matter, to
27 request a Zoning Map Amendment from the R-4 to the
28 R-5B district for Lot 800 and Square 3115, which is

1 presently the site of the vacant Gage School
2 Elementary building.

3 Although not an issue in this case,
4 because it is not a PED, the Applicant has proffered
5 letters that it is their intention to renovate and
6 build, in addition to the Gage School building, to
7 allow it's efficient occupancy as a senior citizen
8 apartment house. Which use is consistent with the
9 Applicant's contract or RFP with the D.C.
10 Government, Department of Administrative Services,
11 the owner of the property.

12 Very briefly, as it is contained in the
13 Applicant's written statement in support of this
14 application, please let me state that the proposed
15 zoning to R-5B will permit the residential
16 development of the site to a density level which is
17 essentially the same as the existing R-4 zoning of
18 the site.

19 The Map Amendment will however permit
20 the construction of a new apartment addition to the
21 Gage School building which would not be possible
22 under the existing R-4 zoning conditions. This is
23 the meat for the Map Amendment case and the hearing
24 tonight.

25 The proposed rezoning is not
26 inconsistent with the moderate density residential
27 comprehensive plan land use designation on the
28 property. And it is consistent with the surrounding

1 land use and zoning patterns in the area, which
2 includes a variety of R-4 and R-5B zoned properties,
3 including row dwellings, apartment houses and
4 dormitory uses.

5 Before introducing our witnesses, I
6 would like to call to the Commission's attention,
7 the Applicant's written submission. I don't know
8 what exhibit it is in your file, but it appears like
9 this.

10 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: We have had
11 that in our package and we have had time to review
12 it.

13 MR. NERO: Okay. Just a few exhibits
14 I'd call your attention to in terms of orientating
15 yourselves to the property. Exhibits A and B, Base
16 Atlas and Sandborn Atlas maps showing the property
17 and it's relationship to the surrounding properties.

18 Exhibit B is the Zoning Map and it's
19 relation to, showing the property in red as it
20 relates to other properties. Exhibit E is a
21 photographic exhibit showing the property and
22 surrounding properties. I would be calling two
23 witnesses tonight, Ms. Andree Y. Gandy, the
24 Executive Director of PIC, seated to my left.

25 And Mr. Bob Morris, our Traffic
26 Consultant. Mr. Andrew Bryant is the Project
27 Architect and he is present. We don't plan on
28 calling him, the building is really not of issue,

1 however if he is needed, he is here to answer any
2 questions that you or anybody else may have.

3 Mr. Bryant, we've submitted his resume
4 for the record. He has been qualified before this
5 body in the past as an expert in architecture. With
6 that, I would like to call Ms. Gandy, thank you.

7 MS. GANDY: Good evening. I am Andree
8 Y. Gandy, I'm the Director of the People's
9 Involvement Corporation. Over the last 15 years,
10 PIC has made a very firm and unwavering, sorry, PIC
11 has made a very firm and unwavering commitment to
12 the elderly and to Ledroit Park.

13 We developed and sold to low income
14 families three single family homes that we acquired
15 from Howard University. And at 512, 514 U Street,
16 PIC developed and restored nine two-bedroom
17 cooperatives that were sold to low income families,
18 as well. We've also very recently cut the ribbon on
19 the Colony House Apartments for the Elderly at
20 Georgia and Farragut Streets, N.W., 57 apartments
21 for the elderly there.

22 In addition, we have on the board in
23 front of HUD and we've been assured that it will be
24 closed by November, 125-bed extended health nursing
25 home at Seventh and F Streets, N.W. So then the
26 commitment to the elderly is constantly being moved
27 on by our corporation.

28 We have acquired two additional parcels

1 in Ledroit Park and both of which will be developed
2 for the enhancement of the community. For well over
3 25 years, PIC has been attempting to remove this
4 blight and eyesore from the community and we feel
5 very strongly that this is the appropriate use, the
6 housing for the elderly, as well as the timeliness
7 for removing the eyesore and we enjoy a great deal
8 of support.

9 We have met with several community
10 groups and have received community support from ANC
11 5C, from the Bloomingdale Civic Association and from
12 the Ledroit Park Civic Association. Thank you, very
13 much.

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you.

15 MR. NERO: I'd now like to call Mr. Bob
16 Morris.

17 MR. MORRIS: Good evening, Madam
18 Chairperson, members of the Commission. I'm Robert
19 L. Morris, Traffic Engineer and Transportation
20 Planner. My home address, 9109 Rouen Lane, Potomac,
21 Maryland 20854.

22 At the request of the Applicant, I have
23 made a traffic study and determined what the effect
24 would be of the proposed reuse of the Gage School
25 and my report is included in the material in front
26 of you.

27 Very briefly, the conditions we have in
28 traffic terms are quite good in this area. All the

1 four surrounding intersections of the square, which
2 includes Gage School, operate at an A level of
3 service during both peak hours. There is a Metro
4 Bus, the G-2, a block and a half to the north at
5 Second and W.

6 And I have shown in my report what the
7 effect would be of the proposed use developed as 47
8 units for senior citizens. I would note, however,
9 that if the property were developed under the
10 maximum zoning envelope and not as senior citizens,
11 but as normal housing, the effect would still be
12 imperceptible. You would still have an A level of
13 service at all of the intersections.

14 So my bottom line has to be that there
15 would be no adverse impact. And as a practical
16 matter, with the proposal of the People's
17 Involvement Corporation to make this development for
18 senior citizens, it actually would be an improvement
19 over what could be on the site under the existing
20 zoning.

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Does that
22 complete your testimony?

23 MR. NERO: It does, yeah, Madam
24 Chairperson.

25 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you.
26 Questions from the Commissioners?

27 MR. PARSONS: No questions.

28 MR. FRANKLIN: I have none.

1 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you. We
2 will move to the report of the Office of Planning.

3 MR. BASTIDO: Good evening, Madam
4 Chairperson and members of the Commission. For the
5 record, my name is Roberto Bastido with the Office
6 Planning. The Office of Planning submitted it's
7 report on this case on September 15th. The Office
8 of Planning report outlines planning and policy
9 issues relating to the case.

10 This is consistent with the
11 comprehensive plan. Then the land use map, land use
12 elements, world-wide elements, actions in support of
13 the housing for the area, with some areas in tact.
14 And also there is a map change because of the
15 covenant that the Applicant has entered with the
16 District Government to keep basically the existing
17 school and just add the two-story addition to be
18 able to provide the number of dwelling units
19 required to make the project economically feasible,
20 we included in our report.

21 The Office of Planning believes that the
22 Applicant meets all the requirements of the zoning
23 regulation and accordingly recommends approval of
24 this Application. That concludes my presentation.
25 If you have any questions, I would try to answer
26 them. Thank you.

27 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you. Any
28 questions for Office of Planning?

1 (No response.)

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: I have none
3 either. Thank you. Next on the Agenda is the
4 report of other agencies. I do not believe we have
5 any other, do we Mr. Bastido?

6 MR. BASTIDO: Unfortunately you are
7 correct.

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: With that, we
9 will move to the report of Advisory Neighborhood
10 Commission 5C. Is anyone here representing ANC 5C?

11 (No response.)

12 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: If not, as was
13 noted earlier, we have received in writing a letter
14 from ANC 5C endorsing that giving, lending complete
15 support to this Application. With that we will move
16 on to testimony from parties in support. Any
17 parties in support who would like to testify or
18 persons in support who would like to testify now at
19 this time?

20 (No response.)

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: All right.
22 Then we will move to persons in opposition. Oh, are
23 you in support? Please come forward and you were
24 sworn in?

25 MS. HAYNESWORTH: Yes.

26 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Yes, please sit
27 down and give us your testimony.

28 MS. HAYNESWORTH: My name is Laurester

1 Haynesworth. I live at 2009 Flagler Place, which is
2 directly across the road from Gage School. I've
3 been there for five years and I cannot wait to see
4 something done to that school. It will change the
5 whole area. And it will definitely cut down a lot
6 of the bad traffic that I've been noticing over the
7 last several years. And I hope to see this work
8 start soon.

9 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Good, thank
10 you. Just a second. Let me just make sure if we
11 have any questions. No questions? Thank you. Any
12 other persons in support before we move to persons
13 in opposition?

14 MS. MCLEMORE: Good evening. My name is
15 Jeannette McLemore. My Mom, Jaimie Robinson has
16 been living directly next door to the Gage School
17 since 1953. And so she's been looking at that
18 school for many years. And we have some concerns
19 because she has had a lot of water damage from the
20 school.

21 There is a drain that is about ten feet
22 from her property and during the years it has grown
23 up and when it rains, the water just drains down to
24 her property giving damage to the basement.

25 Also, I am concerned about, are there
26 any precautions that this organization plans to take
27 as far as protecting her property. I know it is
28 going to be a lot of digging and dust and what not

1 and I would like to know is there anything that can
2 be done in some way to protect the property, or are
3 you planning to do something about the water damage.

4 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Let me ask you,
5 I need to understand a little bit more about this
6 water damage. Would you describe a little bit more
7 how the water damage is occurring. You said there
8 was a pipe?

9 MS. MCLEMORE: It's a drain there on the
10 property of the school.

11 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: There is a
12 drain.

13 MS. MCLEMORE: Drain, yes.

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: And it's --

15 MS. MCLEMORE: And it's been there since
16 I was a child. And it's grown up now over the years
17 from the weeds and grass. And now when it rains, I
18 guess the water backs up and the water comes down to
19 her property which goes into the basement.

20 And we had contacted Harry Thomas many
21 times and he has been out to the property. And we
22 had made several calls and they promised to come
23 back to do something about the problem, but they
24 never have. So I'm asking is this new organization
25 inheriting this problem? And I wanted to know, can
26 it be alleviated in some way?

27 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Well, maybe we
28 can get the Applicant to respond to that, if that's

1 appropriate.

2 MR. NERO: We can respond.

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: There's so few
4 people. This isn't normal procedure, but if you
5 don't mind, would you mind responding to it. Stay
6 there so -- if you don't mind.

7 MS. MCLEMORE: Would you like me to go?

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Why don't you
9 just stay here and we will, so then that way you can
10 have some direct --

11 MR. BRYANT: Thank you, Madam Chairman.
12 My name is Andrew Bryant, Architect, President of
13 Bryant Associates, an Architect for the Gage School
14 elderly school conversion. First I'd like to state,
15 as you know, there is a requirement that we have a
16 storm water management plan which years ago was not
17 in existence.

18 And what this does is collects the
19 water, particularly on those paved areas and the
20 roof area, so that you don't have the run offs,
21 particularly when we have heavy storms when there is
22 instant heavy rainfall. That water then is caught
23 in reservoirs and contained and fed gradually into
24 the street storm system.

25 So that where we had problems like that
26 in the past in many neighborhoods, that wouldn't be
27 a problem. Now Gage School sits detached from your
28 mother's house and there are steps that come out of

1 that building, there's a retaining wall and the
2 grade slopes down.

3 What we will be doing, of course with
4 the new building, converting it to an elderly
5 addition, we will be putting on a new roof with
6 gutters and downspouts, a collective system for that
7 building, as well as positioning area drains in the
8 site so that the water is collected and disbursed
9 into the city system.

10 And we feel certain that that will solve
11 the problem. There will be some discomfort during
12 the construction, but there is also another
13 requirement that we have to meet and that is a soil
14 erosions plan. Which means that a system of bales
15 will be put around the site so that the mud and
16 debris is not washed into the streets.

17 There will be a driveway access in and
18 out of the site that will be paved with crushed rock
19 to help to remove the residue from the tires of the
20 trucks. And this is all designed to protect the
21 neighborhood. And in addition to that, we will of
22 course have the Contractor introduced to you so that
23 every attempt can be made to make it as less of an
24 impact and discomfort as possible.

25 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Is that
26 answering your questions? Do you have any other
27 questions? This is being done through the
28 permitting process, which isn't through us. But

1 these are other requirements that have to be met and
2 they have to file these plans and get these
3 approvals in order to get the building permit to do
4 work on this site.

5 MS. MCLEMORE: Okay. I have a question.

6 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Sure.

7 MS. MCLEMORE: My mother was concerned
8 about the dust flying, and what not, on to her
9 property. Is there some way that you could put up
10 plastic on her windows or something to kind of knock
11 down some of the dust?

12 MR. BRYANT: Well, I'm sure that will be
13 done. First of all, they will wet down the debris
14 so that there's not the problem with the dust flying
15 around to start with.

16 MS. MCLEMORE: Right.

17 MR. BRYANT: And, because that slows the
18 building process down also. So attempts will be
19 made to handle that.

20 MS. MCLEMORE: So how long will this
21 process, you know, will it take to complete it?

22 MR. BRYANT: I would imagine
23 construction would run no more than about a year.

24 MS. MCLEMORE: A year. Okay, I guess
25 she's stood it all these years, she can stand it a
26 year more. Thank you.

27 MR. BRYANT: Well, one thing's for
28 certain, once it is completed it will be a much

1 improvement of the, it will not only look good but
2 it is going to serve a very utilitarian kind of a
3 function and also solve some of those problems.

4 MS. MCLEMORE: That would be great.
5 Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you Mr.
7 Bryant. Oh yes, make sure that you fill out the
8 identification slips for the Court Reporter. Does
9 anyone else wish to -- does anyone else wish to
10 testify that has not testified, either in support or
11 in opposition to this? Please come forward and
12 identify yourself.

13 MR. BRANNUM: Good evening. My name is
14 Robert Brannum. I live at 158 Adams Street, N.W. I
15 have been there for nearly ten years. It is the
16 house that my mother was married in, so I have been
17 a part of that community for all of my life. I have
18 also served as the past President of the
19 Bloomingdale Civic Association.

20 I have long considered that building to
21 be an eyesore and I am pleased that there are plans
22 or is a plan, although I believe it to be
23 unsolicited and not open to the general public, to
24 improve Gage School. I have some concerns however
25 on the plan itself, while I support the development
26 of the school.

27 I feel that some additional information
28 needs to be provided by the Applicant as far as how

1 the proposal will not negatively impact on the
2 community. Particularly, putting in a series of
3 elderly dwellings in the neighborhood, in that there
4 are not many services or other kinds of support,
5 shopping, venues in the community, and, other than
6 liquor stores.

7 We must realize also that directly
8 across from Gage School is a dormitory for Howard
9 University and a series of homes that are rented to
10 Howard students. And the night life around that
11 area, I don't think has been addressed. Another
12 factor I believe needs to be addressed is I think
13 more emphasis has to be done on the traffic that
14 this particular dwelling would bring.

15 Second Street parking and traffic is
16 tight. I believe that the Office of Planning needs
17 to revisit the parking and the street direction,
18 possibly making one, making it one way, restricting
19 parking on one side of the street. Unless the
20 Applicant intends to have some kind of a parking
21 lot, I think the parking situation is going to be,
22 have a negative impact on the community.

23 In addition to the negative impact that
24 it has when Howard University is in session, not
25 only on Second Street but also on Flagler Place and
26 that surrounding area. The other is an
27 environmental impact. There is a tree that sits in
28 front of Gage School, which in the summer time I

1 believe has, is more photographic than the trees
2 that are on the tidal basin.

3 I don't know if the Applicant has plans
4 in it's development to tear that tree down. I would
5 hope not. And I don't know that his plans are, I
6 have not seen his plans. I have not seen the plans
7 or the evaluation that was completed on September
8 15th by the Office of Planning. So I have not been
9 able, not even to comment directly on it, except
10 from what I hear this evening.

11 The height addition that is being given
12 to the dwelling, I don't think that many in the
13 community understand that the two, that the two-
14 floor addition, how that will impact on the views
15 from the various homes in the community.

16 There will, as I said, the parking and
17 the other issues, I don't -- the moderately income
18 housing plan, I don't know, I have an idea what I
19 would want it to be, but I don't know if the
20 Applicant's moderate income plan is going to be
21 somehow or another changed in the future so that the
22 residents of the apartments become, the
23 configuration of the apartment would change or
24 alter.

25 There is the concern that I have that
26 the structure or the culture of our community has
27 been negatively impacted by considerable homes being
28 broken into, the cars being broken -- my automobile

1 has been stolen four times. I do not oppose the
2 development of the project. I do not oppose PIC's
3 seeming to improve the project. I simply oppose the
4 Application in certain specifics so that unless they
5 are addressed, I think it would have not as complete
6 a positive impact on the community.

7 I support PIC's Application to and
8 desire to develop, but I would just think that some
9 additional changes or some additional concerns and
10 information needs to be provided to the community.
11 I mean PIC come into the community and saying that
12 we want to build Gage School and these are our plans
13 are well and good.

14 But when it gets down to the nuts and
15 bolts of what's actually being proposed, when it
16 gets down to having the Office of Planning making
17 evaluation and that evaluation not coming to the
18 community. I have not seen the specific plans that
19 were, that's before the Commission.

20 So what I am addressing is what I've
21 heard at this public hearing from the Applicant and
22 from the comments of the Office of Planning. And
23 based on what I've heard, I think there's some
24 reconsiderations that need to be made or additional
25 information that needs to be given to the
26 Commission.

27 And if addressed, I believe the project
28 can go forward. I don't object to the project in

1 total, just some certain aspects that I feel can be
2 modified.

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: And you need to
4 get some of this information, because we've got
5 quite a bit more. We have been, we often don't go
6 over material that we have and have had lots of time
7 to read. It's just highlighted. And so we've got
8 more material here that you probably need to take a
9 look at.

10 MR. BRANNUM: Primarily it is the
11 environmental impact. There is a school or
12 university environment directly across from these
13 senior citizens. That's all, that's what I'm
14 saying. And there are not that many, Bloomingdale
15 doesn't have anything in it except houses,
16 residential.

17 Once that school closed, there is
18 nothing in Bloomingdale except the homeowners and
19 apartments, that's it. There is not a store in
20 Bloomingdale. There is not a recreation facility in
21 Bloomingdale. There is not a police station there.
22 That's it. It's a residential area.

23 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Well, I'll ask
24 the Applicant to address these things, in closing
25 remarks to address your questions. Just a second,
26 are there any other questions from the
27 Commissioners?

28 MS. DOBBINS: I have a comment, if you

1 don't mind, Madam Chair.

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Yes, please.

3 MS. DOBBINS: I just need for you, for
4 Mr. Brannum to understand that the Commission has no
5 plans before it. This is only a map amendment so
6 the Commission has no development plans for that
7 site. This is a map amendment to change the zoning
8 on the property itself. That's all.

9 MR. BRANNUM: I understand.

10 MS. DOBBINS: Okay.

11 MR. BRANNUM: But they wouldn't come
12 here unless they had plans.

13 MS. DOBBINS: Okay. What I'm saying --

14 MR. BRANNUM: They wouldn't come --

15 MS. DOBBINS: The Commission does not
16 have the plans.

17 MR. BRANNUM: No, the Applicant would
18 not be here, they wouldn't, it is too expensive for
19 them to go through all this.

20 MS. DOBBINS: No, I understand. I just
21 wanted you to know that the Commission did not have
22 plans before it to consider --

23 MR. BRANNUM: Right.

24 MS. DOBBINS: -- as part of this case.

25 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: And so we are
26 not considering those plans --

27 MS. DOBBINS: Right.

28 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: -- in making

1 our decision, and will not be.

2 MR. BRANNUM: Well, I still, that
3 doesn't diminish the, I feel my arguments, on the
4 amendment application. Because of the traffic,
5 because of where the building is located and it's
6 going from R-5 to -- if you give them permission to
7 go from R-5 or to the other then --

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: And I think
9 they can readdress maybe some of the traffic
10 comments in their closing if that's all right.
11 Okay. Thank you. Is there anyone who wishes to
12 testify before the closing remarks? Yes.

13 MS. SANDERS: I'll be brief. My name is
14 Serita Sanders, I live at 112 U Street, N.W., right
15 around the corner from the Gage School. I'm a
16 member of the Civic Association and this was brought
17 up at our last meeting. My position is that I'm in
18 full support of PIC coming into the neighborhood.

19 I can't really speak for the whole
20 Association, but the general feel at the meeting was
21 that we are really happy that something is being
22 done with the school because it is a real eyesore,
23 there is a lot of drug activity.

24 But my concern is not so much them
25 coming into the neighborhood as what they are doing
26 is the elderly. We have a lot of crime, drug
27 dealers, as he stated, robberies. I think that you
28 all should really have some type of security 24-

1 hours to make sure that they are not preyed upon.

2 And also, I think that you should work
3 with the community. We meet once a month, every
4 third Monday of every month, such that the community
5 will embrace this project rather than you just
6 sitting there. I just happened to find out about it
7 because I walked, I take walks and I saw the poster.

8 But if they come in later, there is
9 going to be a lot of opposition, when I think it's
10 really positive. Because you've got so many renters
11 coming in there and some of the people that don't
12 keep up with what's going on and they are a little
13 confused.

14 But I think if they had some kind of
15 outreach where the elderly was involved with the
16 community once they came in, as well as coming to
17 our community meetings and say, this is where we
18 are, this is what we're doing. You got any problems
19 with it? It will go, you know, in nice orderly
20 progress. And I think that's all I had
21 in my notes.

22 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you. Any
23 questions from the signers? If not, then we are
24 ready for your closing remarks.

25 MR. NERO: Madam Chair, rather than a
26 closing remark, if we could just address very
27 briefly some of the --

28 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: That's what I

1 meant.

2 MR. NERO: Okay. Ms. Gandy, if you
3 could describe to the Zoning Commission and address
4 the witnesses' concerns about the well-being of the
5 elderly and who will be residing at the Gage School
6 project and the availability of services for them,
7 security and community outreach to start. There are
8 other issues that were brought up as well.

9 MS. GANDY: Let me first mention that
10 this was a solicited Application, a competitively
11 bid one with the Department of Administrative
12 Services. And it was indicated that the Application
13 would address the need for elderly housing which was
14 a plus for PIC because it is a commitment that we've
15 had to the elderly.

16 I quite frankly think, having lived in a
17 house with four generations, I didn't know for years
18 that they call that an extended family. I just
19 thought everybody lived with their grandparents and
20 their great-grandparents. But it is a plus that
21 you've got the elderly across the street from the
22 students at Howard.

23 That inter-generational interaction has
24 occurred often at The Colony and each one gives a
25 great deal to the other. I am going to try and
26 remember some of these that you mentioned. I have
27 attended at least five meetings in the Ledroit
28 Park/Bloomington/Eckington area on this property.

1 When we went before the groups initially
2 we had a plan in mind for the elderly. And we got
3 any number of recommendations from the residents
4 about how they'd like to have this happen, the
5 property. How they would like to make sure that
6 there are no firm walls around the property that
7 won't allow the community to be able to participate
8 in the property so that they can exchange one with
9 the other in terms of a community having access to
10 that property.

11 We have already talked to Bannicker,
12 this was before we made our bid. We talked to
13 Bannicker High School and have gotten commitments
14 that the community services hours by the Seniors and
15 the Juniors can be done in that building. We've
16 talked about having aerobics and other activities
17 for the elderly there.

18 We have commitments for a Geriatric
19 Department from Howard University. They want to
20 plow in a lot of the benefits that could benefit,
21 not only the elderly in the building, people living
22 in the surrounding communities. As has been the
23 case with The Colony. We opened up the property for
24 community meetings, so that they have been meeting
25 in tight living room space which has limited the
26 number of people that could actively get involved.

27 They now hold their meetings at The
28 Colony.

1 And so I think you will see two things.
2 First of all, PIC has been around 30 years now. We
3 are not going anywhere. If there are things that
4 need to be modified, even as we move along with this
5 project, that will happen. We are not going to
6 disappear. You know where we are.

7 If you can't make any of the meetings
8 that we will have between now and the time that we
9 actually cut the ribbon on the project, we will be
10 glad to talk to you during the day or in my office.
11 Whenever you have questions, feel free to get them
12 answered. As I said to them during the first of
13 the five sessions that we've had, this is not your
14 one opportunity to air your concerns and get your
15 questions answered.

16 And that's real important that we leave
17 you with that. This has got to be something that
18 you feel real good about so that you become very
19 proprietary about this property. And you take that
20 kind of ownership over it. And we collectively have
21 to maintain and we are going to take care of the
22 elderly who live there.

23 By the way, as with The Colony, we will
24 have 24-hour security. And one last thing, I love
25 trees as well. I don't know and I don't know if
26 Andy is going to get me for this, but we will try
27 wherever possible to preserve them. If it means
28 that much and it's that beautiful, clearly we won't

1 go in and tear it down unless there is no other way
2 to get in there and I doubt that, is there Andy?

3 MR. BRYANT: No problem.

4 MR. NERO: I can address this myself.
5 The proposed addition to the building will not
6 exceed the height of the existing Gage School. And
7 certainly will not exceed the height maximums of the
8 R-5B District. In terms of traffic, Bob Morris gave
9 his traffic report. I would only add that during
10 the construction phase and after the construction,
11 the project will have more than adequate parking.

12 The requirement for senior citizens is
13 one for six basis. We are going to have, the site
14 is much, it is quite large, we will have more than
15 adequate parking on the site. There will be no
16 demand for curb parking places on the street which
17 surround the property. And I hope we've addressed
18 everything. If we didn't --

19 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Commissioner
20 Franklin.

21 MR. FRANKLIN: Two questions. One, is
22 this a subsidized project?

23 MS. GANDY: Yes.

24 MR. FRANKLIN: By Federal Government?

25 MS. GANDY: Yes.

26 MR. FRANKLIN: I take it that its
27 location meets the HUD standards then for location
28 of elderly housing?

1 MS. GANDY: It does.

2 MR. FRANKLIN: And that would, I
3 suppose, include the proximity of convenient
4 shopping? Can you address that?

5 MS. GANDY: Yes. We have many ancillary
6 programs that we offer to the elderly at The Colony
7 and we intend to do the same thing at the Gage
8 property. We have vans and one of which is a 17
9 passenger van that was donated to PIC by the Poor
10 Roberts Foundation.

11 And that is made available to them, not
12 only for shopping, but we have relationships with
13 people such as the Kennedy Center and we can get
14 free tickets and we take them down, if we know 24-
15 hours ahead of time and they see plays free of
16 charge. We take them and bring them back.

17 And we are going to do whatever it takes
18 to make sure that they are safe and have access to
19 the goods and services that they are going to need.
20 Yes, the Office of Aging will do in Gage as they are
21 now doing at The Colony. October the 1st, they will
22 start a hot lunch program, that is open to the
23 community as well with Arts and Crafts.

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Any other
25 questions? Now I think we have all our questions
26 answered.

27 MR. NERO: Okay. With that, we will
28 stand on the record, unless there are any other

1 questions.

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Thank you.

3 MR. PARSONS: Madame Chairman, I think
4 we have an unusual circumstance here, but we have a
5 win/win situation with the City and the community
6 and I would move we approve this Application.

7 MR. FRANKLIN: I second the motion.

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Any discussion?

9 (No response.)

10 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: All in favor,
11 signify by saying aye.

12 (Chorus of ayes.)

13 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Motion carries.

16 MS. DOBBINS: Staff will record the vote
17 as three to zero to take proposed action to approve
18 Application Number 97-4. Mr. Parsons, Mr. Franklin
19 and Ms. Kress who approved. Ms. Bennett not having
20 participated, having recused herself from this case.

21 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: Should we
22 officially close this meeting and go to a Special
23 Meeting?

24 MS. DOBBINS: Yes.

25 VICE CHAIRPERSON KRESS: I hereby
26 declare this meeting closed. Thank you.

27 MS. DOBBINS: Actually, we could have
28 done a modified closing statement.

1 (Whereupon, the foregoing
2 matter went off the record at 8:01
3 p.m.)
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