



Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association

1502 Otis Street, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20017 202.529-0953

January 11, 2012

Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W. Suite 220-S
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Zoning Commissioners,

The Brookland Neighborhood Civic Association (BNCA) looks forward to appearing before you at the January 19, 2012 public hearing on Case No. 10-28 –Application of 901 Monroe Street, LLC for Consolidated Review and Approval of a Planned Unit Development and Zoning Map Amendment for 901 Monroe Street, N.E. (Square 3829, Lots 3, 4, 11, 22,, and 820).

BNCA has been deeply involved in reviewing, discussing, and engaging on the 901 Monroe Street, LLC proposal for over two years. In our testimony to you on January 19, 2012, we will describe our engagement in the process and the reasons why the Association is supportive of the proposed project.

We will also describe our concerns regarding the Applicant's request for a C-2-B Zoning Map Amendment. These concerns echo many of the concerns you raised at the initial March 14, 2011 Regular Meeting on this case. I am attaching a transcript of that portion of the March 14, 2011 meeting to assist in your recollection of those concerns.

Sincerely,

Caroline Petti

Caroline Petti, President

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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ZONING COMMISSION

+ + + + +

REGULAR MEETING

+ + + + +

MONDAY

MARCH 14, 2011

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The Regular Meeting of the
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
convened in Room 220 South, 441 4th Street,
N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, pursuant to
notice at 6:30 p.m., Anthony J. Hood,
Chairman, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

ANTHONY J. HOOD, Chairman
KONRAD SCHLATER, Vice Chairman
PETER MAY, Commissioner (NPS)
GREG SELFRIDGE, Commissioner

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

SHARON S. SCHELLIN, Secretary
DONNA HANOUSEK, Zoning Specialist
ESTHER BUSHMAN, General Counsel
JAMISON WEINBAUM, Director of Office of
Zoning

OFFICE OF PLANNING STAFF PRESENT:

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1 of C2A zoning with the PUD and five percent
2 FAR relief. Of course, OP will continue to
3 work with the Applicant and the community to
4 have concerns raised by OP's report by other
5 District agencies and by the public addressed
6 prior to a public hearing. That concludes
7 OP's testimony. I'd be happy to answer any
8 questions that the Commission may have.

9 CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you,
10 very much, Mr. Cochran. Let me just ask right
11 off, we're also being asked to set down in the
12 alternative the associated C2A Map Amendment.
13 Has the Applicant agreed to that? Are they
14 in favor of doing both?

15 MR. COCHRAN: The Applicant
16 suggested that it would be up to OP if it
17 wanted to offer that alternative.

18 CHAIRMAN HOOD: So, on the record,
19 they are in agreement to us advertising the
20 alternative?

21 MR. COCHRAN: I believe so.

22 CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. I saw some

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1 strong heads move. So yes, they are in
2 agreement. Okay. Let's open it up. Any
3 questions or comments. And I'm going to let
4 my colleagues go first, but I do want to talk
5 about this proposed benefit and amenities
6 package. But I will leave it up to -- we will
7 open it up to my colleagues first. Any
8 questions or comments? Commissioner May?

9 COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes. I didn't
10 see a future land use map in your report or in
11 the Applicant's case. And I'm wondering why
12 we didn't see that and I'm also curious as
13 what it looks like.

14 MR. COCHRAN: We went -- okay.
15 There was certainly no intention to omit the
16 land use map from OP's report. The square in
17 which the Applicant is proposing the
18 development shows a moderate density mixed use
19 commercial and residential development for
20 about a quarter of the square and low density,
21 residential development for the remainder of
22 the square.

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1 COMMISSIONER MAY: So three
2 quarters of the square is low density,
3 residential on the land use map?

4 MR. COCHRAN: As shown in the land
5 use map. Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER MAY: Okay. Well, I
7 need to see that. I'm sure the other
8 Commissioners would like to see it as well.
9 Do you agree with the Applicant's method of
10 calculating what's cellar space and what's
11 not? Because, I mean, I was a little confused
12 by it and I don't necessarily agree with it.

13 MR. COCHRAN: I agree with the
14 Applicant's method of calculating the square
15 footage that should be excluded for the ramp
16 going down and I've seen no reason to question
17 the Applicant's calculation of the cellar
18 space. But I have not gone over that
19 thoroughly because I didn't see a need to.

20 COMMISSIONER MAY: Okay. Well, I
21 --

22 MR. COCHRAN: I'd certainly be

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1 explore that further if you set it down.

2 COMMISSIONER MAY: I'd like to
3 understand that better and, if they're doing
4 it some different way and we've accepted that
5 before, I'd like to know the circumstances of
6 that being done before. Because again, it
7 doesn't -- it doesn't coincide with my memory
8 of calculating cellar space, but I don't claim
9 that my memory is perfect.

10 And then I'm very interested in
11 seeing more about what the benefits of the
12 project might be, because given the amount of
13 land that's being significantly upzoned here,
14 the benefits package doesn't seem to be
15 proportionate

16 CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Vice-
17 Chairman?

18 VICE-CHAIRMAN SCHLATER: Mr.
19 Chairman, thank you. I just want to note, on
20 the record, my general concurrence with the --
21 with looking at the site for C2A in the
22 alternative. It seems like a better fit,

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1 given that I know we did C2B across the tracks
2 for Catholic University. But I think it
3 allows up to 90 feet height and I don't think
4 we want people getting in the mind set that 90
5 feet would be appropriate here. So I just
6 think C2A looks like a better fit. I'm happy
7 to set down C2B, as well, if we get to that
8 point. Also, I would like to put in a plug
9 for -- on these applications and the OP
10 reports, getting to see both the generalized
11 land use map and the future land use map. We
12 need to see that. Otherwise, we're flying
13 blind, so to speak. So that's something I
14 would certainly like to see. And I'm not
15 decided as to whether I need to see that
16 before set down or not. But it's certainly
17 something that should be in every application.
18 It's fairly important.

19 The other thing I'm having a hard
20 time getting my head around is we've got a
21 small area plan for Brookland and we get
22 snippets of it here and there in both the OP

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1 report and in the Applicant's statement, but I
2 don't get a good sense for what is in the
3 small area plan. And we do read that the
4 small area plan recommends 50 feet of height,
5 yet this application is for 60 feet of height.
6 It sounds fairly prescriptive, so I'd like to
7 understand some of the context. And maybe
8 that just means -- I don't know if I can get a
9 copy of the small area plan or you could even
10 send me a link and we don't have to waste the
11 paper on it and I can read it from my
12 computer. But it would be good to see that,
13 just to understand what's recommended there.
14 Because I do have some concerns about the
15 scale of the building in relation to its
16 surroundings. I think this is an -- this site
17 is an excellent candidate for mixed use
18 retail, residential, particularly on Monroe
19 Street. But it's -- you would have to be very
20 sensitive to the fact that there are existing
21 row homes on that block and this building is
22 going to be a lot taller than those row homes.

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1 you, Mr. Chairman. I think Vice-Chairman
2 Schlater covered a very wide berth of issues
3 with his comments. So I would simply say that
4 C2A, as an alternative, makes a lot of sense
5 to me. I also think shade studies are
6 appropriate, considering the size of the
7 building and its proximity to the row homes.
8 And then we would also, of course, look for
9 this benefit and amenity plan to be beefed up,
10 if this were to go to a hearing stage. I know
11 we're just at set down, but I think we'd like
12 to probably see more and understand, I think,
13 the idea of the value on undergrounding the
14 utility lines. I think it makes a lot of
15 sense, so we can really evaluate this as part
16 of that package.

17 CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. One of the
18 things I would like to see, if we set it down,
19 is a perspective. I want to see how --
20 exactly how this building is going to fit.

21 This is a very quiet neighborhood and now
22 we're getting ready to put a large building

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1 there and I'd like to see how it actually is
2 going to fit. And what I mean by that, I mean
3 I want to see a perspective. And I've looked
4 through here a number of times in the
5 submission, trying to see exactly how that's
6 going to fit. I need to see, if I'm going --
7 and this is actually for the Applicant -- if I
8 am standing at Brookland Station, looking that
9 way, looking towards the site, how is that --
10 how is all that going to relate? How am I
11 going to -- how is that going to fit? You
12 know, I'd like to see it in relationship to
13 the houses and to the school and what's behind
14 it. I need to see different angles of how
15 it's going to fit. Now, I think we tried to
16 accomplish it in your submissions. But,
17 actually, that didn't do it for me. I need to
18 see a perspective of how it's going to exactly
19 fit. And I will tell you that I looked
20 through your submissions and none of them did
21 it for me so I can see how that's going to
22 fit. That's the first thing.

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1 That's one of the things we need to start
2 seeing again. We did that some years ago, and
3 it's about time. It's been about eight years
4 ago and now it's about time for us to start
5 looking at that again.

6 Okay. Commissioners, any other
7 questions? Commissioner May?

8 COMMISSIONER MAY: I just want to
9 go back to one issue that was raised, which,
10 to me, goes to the heart of whether we're
11 really ready to set this down tonight, which
12 is the land use maps question. And hearing
13 the response that three quarters of the square
14 is -- in the land use map is designated for
15 low density residential and, in fact, what's
16 being proposed here is three quarters of the
17 square being developed at moderate or more and
18 mixed use. I mean, I'm not sure how I see how
19 it fits. So I think I'd need to understand
20 that a little bit better from the Office of
21 Planning, seeing the map and seeing why, if
22 it's -- if it differs from the map, why it's

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1 appropriate. Maybe it goes to the Small Area
2 Plan, I don't know. But I just don't -- I
3 don't feel totally comfortable given that
4 divergence from what we know of the
5 Comprehensive Plan. I don't know. That's my
6 thought.

7 CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Anybody
8 else? Commissioner Selfridge? Anybody else
9 feel strongly on that? Vice-Chairman?

10 VICE-CHAIRMAN SCHLATER: I'd like
11 to see it, as well. I think it would just be
12 helpful to have all the facts in front of us
13 before we make the set down decision. So, if
14 we have the map that we could look at, that
15 would be helpful. But I think, you know, if
16 we want -- hold on one second. I think that's
17 right. So, Mr. Chairman, here's what I would
18 propose. We've got another meeting this
19 month, in two weeks. I don't think it's going
20 to cause a significant delay to the approval
21 process here if we wait two weeks; get some
22 additional information for us to look at,

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1 VICE-CHAIRMAN SCHLATER: A fourth
2 meeting? I guess what I would say is I'm
3 feeling a little skittish about this
4 application, just as to whether it's ready.
5 It sounds like there's been plenty of
6 community outreach, although certainly not
7 community consensus on this. I like the
8 building. I like how it relates to Monroe
9 Street. I like the idea of putting housing
10 adjacent to a Metro and transit oriented
11 development. I think the architecture is
12 excellent. I think the quality of the
13 materials in sort of an emerging neighborhood
14 like Brookland for real estate development to
15 be willing to create a building of quality on
16 all sides is something that's to be commended.
17 And there's a lot of good parts about this
18 project. And I want to support it. I'm just
19 wondering if we're there yet.

20 CHAIRMAN HOOD: Commissioner
21 Selfridge?

22 COMMISSIONER SELFIDGE: Thank

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