



## ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 1A

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5 December 2016

### **Testimony on Behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A in Support of ZC 16-11 | Park View Community Partners & District of Columbia Map Amendment & Consolidated PUD at 726-738 Irving Street, NW**

Chairman Hood and members of the Zoning Commission, my name is Kent Boese, and as Chair of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A, I am here today to ask for your favorable consideration on the Map Amendment & Consolidated PUD application at 726-738 Irving Street. After months of community engagement which included over 50 public meetings and workshops and careful consideration of the requested zoning relief, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A voted unanimously in support of this application.

We are of the opinion that the amenities that will result from this project are significant, meaningful, and critical to the long-term health and development of the lower Georgia Avenue corridor. The most significant benefits this project will bring are 90 housing replacement units for low income households, 111 units designated for moderate income households, and 72 market rate units for a total of 273 new housing units. Additionally, 78 low- and moderate income units will be reserved for senior housing. Lastly, this project will also lead to the improvement and maintenance of a permanent 44,404 sq. ft. public park adjacent to the development. Both park space and housing that is affordable to families of all sizes and income levels is extremely important to our Commission.

We believe the key zoning considerations to be addressed in determining the appropriateness of this application are density, height, and relationship of this building to its surroundings.

#### **Underlying Zoning Map & Area Density**

The application seeks to construct 273 housing units on a site that has split zoning. The eastern section that abuts Georgia Avenue is an area of approximately 44,000 sq. ft. zoned C-2-A with the remainder being zoned R-4. By-right, the C-2-A zone

has a maximum height of 50 ft. with up to a 15 ft. penthouse containing mechanical space. These heights are consistent with the abutting C-2-A/GA zone that ends one block to the north at Kenyon Street. Unlike the C-2-A zone, the C-2-A/GA zone has set guidelines for development review through planned unit development (PUD) and special exception proceedings and encourages vertically mixed-uses within a half mile of the Georgia Avenue Metrorail Station along Georgia Avenue, from Park Road to Kenyon Street. Because of this difference, higher density is encouraged in the C-2-A/GA zone beyond the stated 50 ft. height.

I believe the failure to extend the C-2-A/GA zone south to Columbia Road was a result of narrowly interpreting the goal of the Georgia Avenue overlay that exists north of Kenyon. As stated, the radius of the C-2-A/GA zone was set to the area of Georgia Avenue that is within ½ mile of the Georgia Avenue Metro Station – that radius ending at Kenyon. However, this determination failed to take into consideration the close proximity of the Columbia Heights Metro Station which places the Georgia Avenue area between Kenyon and Columbia Road also within ½ mile of a Metro station. In addition, the site is well served by Metro bus not only on Georgia Avenue, but also on Columbia Road and Irving Street. This property meets all the criteria for the C-2-A/GA zone if the Columbia Heights Metro Station is considered instead of the Georgia Avenue station. Because of this, this application should be considered with those goals in mind.

Additionally, it is also important to consider that the entire site is 2.74 acres, which could easily accommodate the planned 273 housing units required for the redevelopment of the New Communities Park Morton Redevelopment effort without requesting Zoning Relief from the 50 ft. height, but this would require developing the entire site for housing. This is something that the community and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A would strongly oppose. The lower Georgia Avenue community currently lacks adequate park space and developing a permanent well maintained park is strongly supported by the Commission. Therefore, the establishment of a permanent 44,404 sq. ft. park on the southern half of the property is a reasonable trade-off for taller buildings on the northern half of the site.

It is also important to note that increasing overall density in the surrounding neighborhood is critical to revitalizing Georgia Avenue. Yet, unlike many of the District's other commercial corridors, lower Georgia Avenue is at a disadvantage in that the surrounding neighborhood terminates 2-3 blocks to the east of the corridor due to the Soldiers Home, Washington Hospital Center, and McMillan

Reservoir. This makes it all the more critical that we leverage the properties along Georgia Avenue to achieve the density necessary for creating and sustaining a vibrant and diverse community at all income levels.

### **Height**

Contextually, the requested height for the building on Georgia Avenue is consistent with planned new development on Georgia Avenue. Similar PUDs that the Zoning Commission has already approved in close proximity to this site include two notable examples – 3333 Georgia Avenue (ZC10-26) located at Georgia Avenue and Morton Street; and 3212-3216 Georgia Avenue (ZC13-10) located between Lamont and Kenyon streets. The height requested and approved by the Zoning Commission for 3333 Georgia was for a 90 ft. building with an 18 ft. penthouse structure – for a total of 108 ft. In the case of 3212-3216 Georgia Avenue, the Zoning Commission approved a building that will be 87 ft. which contains a penthouse that is 18 ft. 6 in. in height – for a total height of 105 ft. 6 in. By comparison, the proposed height of the building in this case is 90 ft. with a 20 ft. penthouse structure, for a total of 110 ft. – which is 5 ft. taller than 3212-3216 Georgia and 2 ft. taller than 3333 Georgia. The difference in heights between these projects is slight. Due to the precedent already set by earlier PUDs on the corridor, the proposal before us today is in keeping and consistent with the development we expect on Georgia Avenue in the future.

### **Relationship of Development to Surroundings**

The scale of the apartment and senior buildings and their relationship to the surrounding residential community is important. The ANC recognizes that a 90 ft. building is much larger than the typical 35 ft. high rowhouse. Keeping this in mind, we do feel that the scale, massing, and location of the buildings are appropriate. The separation of the 90 ft. apartment building from the surrounding rowhouses by Irving Street on the north and a new street and 60 ft. high senior building to the west shows a sensitivity to the need to scale the development back as it nears the existing residential neighborhood. It also compares favorably to what was accomplished when the first phase of Park Morton was constructed. In that instance, “The Avenue” was constructed at 3506 Georgia Avenue at a height of 73 ft. It is located directly across Newton Place from very modest rowhouses of approximately 30 ft. in height. It is also separated from more substantial 35 ft. rowhouses to the west by an alley. As Irving Street is wider than Newton Place, the

scale, massing, and location of the proposed senior building is far more compatible to the surrounding community than what currently exists four blocks to the north (See image below).

### **Conclusion**

As previously stated, ANC 1A strongly supports Zoning Case 16-11 which would allow the construction of both an apartment building and a senior building as part of an overall mixed-income development and permit the redevelopment of the Park Morton Housing Complex to move forward. Additionally, the ANC believes that the inclusion of housing that is affordable, including 90 deeply affordable public housing replacement units, is a significant long-term benefit to the community. The ANC agrees that the proposed heights of the buildings are consistent with recently approved PUDs located in close proximity to the site, and that this project offers significant benefits to a community where housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

In addition to the obvious community benefits of affordable housing and an acre park, the ANC has included a number of other benefits in our earlier filing we feel this project can achieve, to which I would like to add the inclusion of community focused public art or a video installation. Creating beautiful, inclusive, and sustainable communities can be achieved by a number of methods, and we feel the arts is one such path.

I thank you for your consideration, and am available to answer any questions you may have.



View east on 700 block of Newton Place, NW, toward Georgia Avenue. The 73 ft. *The Avenue* (3506 Georgia Avenue) is to the right (rear) with a 35 ft. rowhouse to its west (far right) and more modest rowhouses across the street to the north (left). Newton Place is far narrower than Irving Street and lacks street trees as a result. The proposed senior building on Irving Street would be 13 ft. shorter than *The Avenue* with more space between it and the surrounding rowhouses