

Final

Letters:

To: BZA

Re: BZA Application No. 15677, Malaysian Embassy, 1501 18th St., N.W.

To: BZA

Re: BZA Application No. 15678, Saudi Arabian Chancery, 1520 18th St., N.W.

To:

Re: The "Housing Production Act of 1991"

To: Council Chairman John Wilson

Re: Sodomy Law

To: Council Chairman John Wilson

Re: The Domestic Partnership Act

To: Council Chairman, John Wilson

Re: Sidewalk Cafe Rental Space Amendment Act

### MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 1992 MEETING OF THE DUPONT CIRCLE ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2B

The Dupont Circle ANC 2B held a regularly scheduled meeting on March 25, 1992 at St. Thomas' Parish. Commissioners Bass, Grandis, Meier, Schwager, Shannon and Taylor were present. Chairman Dennis Bass called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Lt. Young of the third district police gave a police report. During the police report, the owner of Lambda Rising bookstore located at 1625 Connecticut Ave., N.W. expressed his concern and frustration over inadequate police patrol on Connecticut Ave. He said that another store he owns, Greybeards, located at 1363 Connecticut Ave., has been burglarized several times, forcing him to sleep on the floor of his store at night to guard it. Lt. Young said that he would send an officer to the store to set up a police patrol. A small business owner on 17th street was also present at the meeting and expressed concern over inadequate police patrol on that street. Ms. Shannon took the women's name and address and said she will be in contact with her to help in this issue.

During the Open Forum, Ms. Kay Eckles, of the Residential Action Coalition announced that there is going to be a public service forum to help residents appeal tax assessments. This forum will take place March 28, at St. Thomas' Parish, from 11:00 - 1:00 p.m.

#### Adoption of the Minutes

Ms. Shannon moved and Ms. Taylor seconded, a motion to adopt the minutes of the March 11, 1992 meeting of the Dupont Circle ANC 2B. This motion passed unanimously.

Issues:

## I.

Mr. David Jackson of the Dept. of Finance and Revenue was present at the meeting along with Ms. Minetta Coles and Mr. Richard McKeithen, the assessor for the Dupont Circle area. Ms. Coles reiterated the procedure used by the tax assessor's office in assessing property tax. This procedure is called the "mass assessment technique" and involves assessing a property according to the market value, which is derived from sales in the area during a specified time period. Mr. Jackson stressed that if anyone feels that their assessment is unfair, they can appeal. Mr. Jackson gave two numbers for residents to call if they have any questions on their tax assessment, 727-6460 and 727-6489.

## II.

Representatives from the Govt. of Malaysia were present at the meeting and gave a short presentation about their plans to purchase the property at 1501 18th Street, N.W. Their plans include using half of the building for office space and the other half for a residential apartment. There will be 9 employees relocated to the Chancery addition who will be using 9 off-street parking spaces. No large social functions will take place in the building. The Embassy has no plans to apply for on-street Diplomatic parking.

Ms. Schwager moved and Ms. Taylor seconded, a motion that ANC 2B support BZA Application No. 15677, to locate the Chancery of Malaysia in an SP-1 zone at 1501 18th Street, N.W. provided the applicant sends the ANC a letter stating that there is no intention to apply for on-street diplomatic parking. This motion passed unanimously.

## III.

Representatives from the Saudia Arabian Embassy were present at the meeting along with their attorney, John Epting of Wilks Artis & Hedrick. The government of Saudi Arabia owns the building at 1520 18th Street, N.W. and would like to locate its cultural office at this property. Ninety persons would be employed at this location. Contracts with parking garages to secure the needed 80 parking spaces have not as yet been finalized. Currently, three on-street diplomatic parking spaces exist. The architect for this project notified the Commission that there are plans to renovate the building and to construct an addition to the north side of the building where now stands a garage. No exterior changes are planned on the 18th street, south and west facades of the building. The HPRB has approved the design concept of the building.

A gentlemen in the audience said that the Saudi Arabian government persecutes gays and there are reports of their being stoned to death. Therefore, the ANC should not facilitate the use of this property by Saudi Arabia. Mr. Meier said that he was not sure the ANC had any authority to consider this when voting on the issue. However, Mr. Grandis went on record to say that the Dupont Circle community is tolerant to all cultures and hopes that any culture wishing to live in the Dupont Circle area would respect all other groups.

Mr. Meier moved and Mr. Grandis seconded, a motion to oppose BZA application

No. 15678 for the Saudi Arabian Chancery addition at 1520 18th Street, N.W. for the following reasons:

1) adequate and firm commitments to provide off-street parking for the 90 occupants of the premises have not been made; 2) there has not been appropriate local review on this application particularly, concerning the demolition of a structure (the garage) contributing in an historic district which should be addressed by the appropriate D.C. agency, i.e., the Mayor's Agent. This motion passed unanimously.

#### IV.

Mr. Bass informed the Commission that the petition deadline for Crown Liquors is April 8 and asked the ANC to authorize him to meet with the applicants to work out a voluntary agreement.

Mr. Grandis moved and Mr. Meier seconded a motion to authorize Mr. Bass to meet with the owners of Crown Liquor to work out a voluntary agreement. This motion passed unanimously.

#### V.

Mr. Terry Lynch was present at the meeting and gave a short presentation concerning the "Housing Production Act of 1991". This bill would allow property owners to make a payment to a city fund and by so doing, the owner could bypass normal zoning procedures to obtain significant zoning and use changes. Mr. Lynch asked the ANC to support neighborhood character in the downtown area by continuing to support mixed-use zoning. The public hearing on this legislation is April 8th.

Mr. Grandis moved and Ms. Taylor seconded, a motion that ANC 2B oppose Bill 9-357 because of ANC 2B's longtime opposition to linking zoning with a "housing" fund which results in loss of residential space and will not ensure the production of housing anywhere in the city. In addition, this bill would destroy the intention of the Comprehensive Plan enacted by the Council. This motion passed unanimously.

The ANC appointed a committee comprised of Ms. Taylor, Mr. Meier, and Mr. Grandis to review details of the bill, and to represent the ANC at the April 8 hearing.

#### Commissioner Reports:

Mr. Grandis reported that some African American church leadership is opposing final Council reading of the "Health Benefits Expansion Act" (domestic partnership). Also, Councilmember Jack Evans is working with gays and lesbians to repeal the Sodomy law this year. Mr. Grandis suggested that Mr. Bass write two separate letters to Council Chairman John Wilson about the Domestic Partnership Legislation and the Repeal of the Sodomy Law.

Mr. Bass moved and Ms. Schwager seconded, a motion to write two letters to Council Chairman John Wilson regarding domestic partnership legislation and the

repeal of the sodomy law, reiterating ANC 2B's support of the Health Benefits Expansion Act and of Bill 9-79, "D.C. Criminal Code Right to Privacy Amendment Act" to repeal the District's anti-sodomy law. This motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Taylor reported that at the recent hearing, the HPRB reviewed the application for 1312 21st Street, as if it were a new application and ordered the developer to remove all illegal construction. This is a major victory for ANC 2B and residents of the neighborhood.

Ms. Schwager reported that she spoke with Mr. Paul Waters, ABC Program Director, and was informed that steps are being taken to remedy the situation at Sabina's, 1813 M St., N.W. Also, she was told that complaints against the establishment, possible prostitution and food violations have been sent to the Corporation Counsel. She will keep the ANC informed.

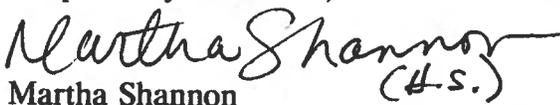
Mr. Bass reported that the 17th Street Merchants have requested the ANC asking the Council to also require that sidewalk and street vendors pay higher and more equitable rates for use of public space.

Mr. Bass moved and Ms. Taylor seconded, a motion that ANC 2B adopt the following resolution:

The Dupont Circle ANC 2B believes that public space used for commercial purposes should be priced at fair market value of the space. Otherwise, a valuable public asset -- public sidewalk space -- is being converted to private use. And, in a time of revenue shortfalls, the Council should maximize the return on all its assets, including publicly owned space. Just as the Council has proposed that sidewalk cafe owners pay more equitable rates, so ANC 2B believes that sidewalk and street vendors should pay higher and more equitable rates for the public space they occupy. This motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Martha Shannon  
Secretary, ANC 2B