

ward3vision

smart growth • vibrant neighborhoods

Chairman Anthony Hood
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th St., NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case No. 16-23 –Valor Development, LLC- Voluntary Design Review

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

We write to express support for the Ladybird project proposed for Spring Valley on the site of the former Superfresh grocery store. We think this mixed-use development will enhance the neighborhood by providing a grocery store -- scaled down in size, as opponents had urged -- and 219 apartments. More residential space is needed in the District, and especially in Ward 3 where housing is so costly because demand outstrips supply. A grocery store would make the area more walkable, bikeable and convenient for residents. It would cut down on residents having to use their cars to travel to other locations to shop for food.

Since the development was first proposed, the developer has worked hard to refine the project to respond to community concerns. The grocery store will be smaller, and there will be more set backs near existing residences and green space accessible to the public. The public space has been improved. The fact is that this number of residential units could be built as a matter-of-right on this site (with the developer purchasing some building rights from an adjacent shopping center), but without the grocery store.

The development proposed gives the community advantages over such a residences-only project. First and foremost, the grocery is an advantage. In addition, a matter-of-right project could be taller than this five-story development and built with fewer set-backs from the property line. And there are amenities that the developer is pledging which would not be assured with a matter-of-right project: landscaped outdoor areas accessible to the public; a HAWK traffic signal to enhance pedestrian safety crossing over Massachusetts Avenue; improvements to the alley behind Wagshals; improvements in the location of deliveries.

Perhaps the greatest contribution to the neighborhood is the size and mix of unit types. Many newer buildings have very small apartments with more efficiencies, and junior one-bedrooms than any other type. The Ladybird project will have larger units including a number of 3-bedroom apartments.

To serve the interests of transit-oriented-development, we would have preferred for Valor to provide convenient shuttle service to the Tenley Metro station rather than the excessive amount of parking required under its agreement with American University, the owner of the adjacent parcel. Having easier access to Metrorail would increase the use of public transportation and decrease the use of cars, cutting down on congestion and environmental degradation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Susan Kimmel
Chair, Ward3Vision

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on January 2, 2018, copies of this letter were sent via email to the following:

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