ANC 6C Planning, Zoning, and Economic Development Committee Report

ANC 6C Commission Meeting: January 9, 2019

PZE Meeting Date: January 2, 2019 6:30 pm
Meeting Location: Northeast Library
7th & D Streets NE
Committee Attendees: Mark Eckenwiler (Chair), 6C04
Joel Kelty, 6C05
Bobbi Krengel
Lauren Oswalt
Bill Sisolak
Drury Tallant
Other Commissioners Present: Christine Healey, 6C01
Jay Adelstein, 6C03
Robb Dooling, 6C06

Agenda Items

1. **913 7th St. NE (BZA 19917)** – Application of Sean Ward and Audrey Tomason, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for a special exception under Subtitle E §§ 205.5 and 5201 from the rear addition requirements of Subtitle E § 205.4, to construct a two-story rear addition to an existing, attached principal dwelling in the RF-1 Zone at 913 7th St. NE (Square 888, Lot 46). Representative: Eric Goetz, Blue Star. Hearing date: Feb. 6, 2019. [6C05] (Case file)

2. **634 Lexington Place NE (HPA 19-097)** – Revised application of Joel Heisey (on behalf of owner Lily Gunn) for concept approval to alter roofline to create third floor and create basement entrance. Representative: Joel Heisey. Hearing date: Jan. 24, 2019. [6C03] (Case file)

3. **434 4th St. NE (BZA 19892)** – Application of Staci Walkes, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for a special exception
   
   a. under the penthouse regulations of Subtitle C § 1500.4, and

   b. under Subtitle C § 1504 from the penthouse setback provisions of Subtitle C § 1502.1(c)(1)(A)

   to construct a penthouse stair enclosure addition to the existing, attached principal dwelling unit in the RF-3 Zone at premises 434 4th Street NE (Square 780, Lot 51). Representative: Michael Burns (ARC200312). Hearing date: Jan. 30, 2019. [6C02] (Case file)

5. **2 Patterson St. NE** – Two of the six respondents to DMPED’s RFP (request for proposals) for development of 42,000sf lot made presentations and answered questions:
   a. Monument Realty
   b. Level 2 Development

   The other four respondents presented at the December committee meeting. ([RFP information](#))

6. **2019 Council oversight hearings** – Brief reminder of upcoming performance and budget oversight hearings for DCRA and other agencies. Substantive PZE action expected in February.
AGENDA ITEM #1: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

913 7TH ST. NE (BZA 19917) – APPLICATION OF SEAN WARD AND AUDREY TOMASON, PURSUANT TO 11 DCMR SUBTITLE X, CHAPTER 9, FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION UNDER SUBTITLE E §§ 205.5 AND 5201 FROM THE REAR ADDITION REQUIREMENTS OF SUBTITLE E § 205.4, TO CONSTRUCT A TWO-STORY REAR ADDITION TO AN EXISTING, ATTACHED PRINCIPAL DWELLING IN THE RF-1 ZONE AT 913 7TH ST. NE (SQUARE 888, LOT 46).

REPRESENTATIVE: ERIC GOETZ, BLUE STAR. HEARING DATE: FEB. 6, 2019. [6C05]

MOTION TO RECOMMEND SUPPORT
(carried 5-0-1)

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. The applicants propose to construct a two-story rear addition extending more than 10’ past the adjacent dwelling to the north. The resulting structure would occupy 59.9% of the lot’s area.

2. The applicants submitted letters of support from the owners of the adjacent properties to the south and north.

3. PZE members noted the potential light and air impacts on the property at 915 7th to the north, but felt that these remained consistent with the standards in the regulations, especially in light of a) the affected neighbor’s assent and b) the applicants’ plan to retain the existing open court (“dogleg”) and convert it to a closed court instead of expanding to the full width of the lot at that location.
Agenda Item #2: Discussion and Recommendations

634 Lexington Place NE (HPA 19-097) – Revised application of Joel Heisey (on behalf of owner Lily Gunn) for concept approval to alter roofline to create third floor and create basement entrance. Representative: Joel Heisey. Hearing date: Jan. 24, 2019. [6C03]

Motion  To recommend support with conditions
(carried 5-1)

Key Discussion Points:

1. The applicant proposes to increase the height of the third story by raising the roofline and to create a new front basement entrance. Despite advance notice of the December meeting, the owner’s agent failed to appear. It later emerged that a medical emergency caused the absence.

2. The PZE has reviewed numerous similar applications for other houses on this block. In response to the deficiencies noted in the December PZE report, which recommended opposition, the applicant provided a new plat, site plan, and section drawing.

3. No letters from neighbors were submitted into the record.

4. PZE members were generally supportive, but noted two areas of concern. First, the new basement entrance will require above-grade railings adjacent to the areaway, but no such railings appear on the plan drawings. Second, the applicant’s plans for retaining (or altering) the metal band on the ridgeline at the top of the front façade are unclear. The PZE’s vote made the recommendation of support conditional on the submission, both to the ANC and HPO, of drawings addressing these concerns.

5. After the PZE met, the applicant provided drawings to the PZE Chair that (minimally) met the request. It is unclear whether these have been provided to HPO staff.
Agenda Item #3: Discussion and Recommendations

434 4th St. NE (BZA 19892) – Application of Staci Walkes, pursuant to 11 DCMR Subtitle X, Chapter 9, for a special exception

a. under the penthouse regulations of Subtitle C § 1500.4, and

b. under Subtitle C § 1504 from the penthouse setback provisions of Subtitle C § 1502.1(c)(1)(A)

to construct a penthouse stair enclosure addition to the existing, attached principal dwelling unit in the RF-3 Zone at premises 434 4th Street NE (Square 780, Lot 51). Representative: Michael Burns (ARC200312). Hearing date: Jan. 30, 2019. [6C02]

Motion To recommend support 
(carried 6-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. The applicant seeks to perform work as described above. In September 2017, both the PZE and ANC voted to support an earlier concept with a larger rooftop addition creating a partial third story.

2. Applicant resubmitted neighbor letters of support from the more aggressive 2017 concept.

3. Relief is necessary here for two reasons. First, any rooftop structure in the RF zones requires a special exception. Second, the applicant proposes to build the stair enclosure at the side property line instead of with a 1:1 setback.

4. PZE members agreed that the application satisfies the criteria for setback relief, including the undue expense of locating the stair enclosure in the center of the building (which would require extensive interior alterations).
Agenda Item #4: Discussion and Recommendations

224 C St. NE (HPA 19-107) – Application of Martin Locraft (on behalf of owner James J. Hogan Jr.) for concept approval for a second-story garage addition. Representative: Martin Locraft. Hearing date: Jan. 24, 2019. [6C02]

Motion To recommend partial support and partial opposition (carried 6-0)

Key Discussion Points:

1. The applicant proposes to build a second-story “media room” atop an existing garage. The addition, unlike the brick garage, would be faced in concrete panels, with one asymmetrically located casement window at the rear.

2. No letters from neighbors were submitted into the record.

3. PZE members were unconcerned about the addition’s façade facing inward (toward the house), which will not be visible from public space. However, even taking into account the often relaxed standards for structures visible from unnamed alleys (as opposed to named streets and alleys), PZE members felt that the disparity in materials, profile, and design was too great. Accordingly, the PZE vote reflects a view that the alley-facing elevation as proposed is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District.
Agenda Item #5: Discussion and Recommendations

2 Patterson St. NE – Two of the six respondents to DMPED’s RFP (request for proposals) for development of 42,000sf lot made presentations and answered questions:

a. Monument Realty

b. Level 2 Development

The other four respondents presented at the December committee meeting. (See below.)

Motion  To recommend that the ANC send a letter to DMPED expressing views on the six proposals
(carried 6-0 in January, 5-0 in December)

Key Discussion Points:

1. As summarized in the December 2018 PZE report, four respondents presented last month:
   a. Jefferson Apartment Group/Argos Group/SGC Development
   b. WC Smith/The Menkiti Group
   c. Tishman Speyer/Thoron Capital
   d. Republic Properties Corporation/Urban Matters Development/Capstone Development Partners

2. All six respondents made ten-minute presentations, with a ten-minute period after each for questions and answers. Both the PZE and the numerous community members in attendance posed questions about various aspects of the four proposals.

3. After the question period, PZE members deliberated on the merits and shortcomings of each proposal. At the end of that time, the PZE voted unanimously to adopt recommendations for each. The PZE also voted to adopt overall comments applicable to all proposals. (See below.)

4. DMPED has promised to hold open its review until mid-January in order to receive and incorporate the ANC’s comments into its next round of comments to the respondents.

5. Jefferson Group: This proposal would provide 424 rental units; new headquarters for World Central Kitchen (non-profit led by Jose Andres); and Centro Nia non-profit childcare and early-childhood education center. PZE reactions included
   a. strong support for the large unit count; the high percentage (40%) of affordable units; the broad mix of affordability levels (from 30% to 80% AMI/MFI); the large fraction of bigger units (10% are 3BR); the established non-profit partners; the architectural design (with balconies and ground-floor rowhouse entrances); the modest parking level (110 car spaces for 424 units); the green features (LEED Gold and support for electric cars); and
   b. concern about the amount and location of bicycle parking.
6. **Smith/Menkiti**: This proposal would provide 405 rental units; new HQ for CityDance and Step Afrika! (including a black-box theatre); and synergy with existing workforce training at 2 M St. one block to the south. PZE reactions included:

   a. **strong support** for the large unit count; the emphasis on affordability at the lower end (30-50% MFI); the established non-profit partners and workforce training nearby; the green features (incl. LEED Gold); the architecture; and the number of bike spaces (135 indoor/secure plus 21 public/outdoor); and

   b. **concern** about the large number of car spaces (186); the low percentage of large units (5.2% are 3BR); and the potential problems with the proposed “Arts Lane,” where pedestrian activity and event programming would share the same private alley with motor vehicle parking and loading access).

7. **Tishman Speyer**: This proposal would provide 435 rental units; a 20,000sf park on two levels; and zero car parking. PZE reactions included:

   a. **strong support** for the large unit count; the large fraction of bigger units (12% are 3BR); the architectural design; the green features (elimination of car parking; LEED Gold);

   b. **qualified support** for the mix of affordability levels (heavily skewed to 50% AMI);

   c. **concern** about the lack of detail/refinement in the site plan and renderings; the lack of clarity about the amount of bike parking; the unhelpful vagueness about “community-serving retail”; and the proposed park’s need for features that would enliven this shadowed space (see below for more on this issue).

8. **Republic**: This proposal would provide 228 rental units; a 170-key hotel; and a plaza/park (11.5Ksf) facing west onto North Capitol. PZE reactions included:

   a. **strong support** for the plaza/park size and configuration and green features (green roof; LEED Gold);

   b. **qualified support** for the mix of affordability levels (heavily skewed to 50% AMI);

   c. **concern** about the low unit count (228); the minuscule percentage of larger units (1.7% are 3BR); the large amount of car parking (220 spaces); the desirability of the hotel;¹ the lack of balconies; and the vague description of proposed retail.

9. **Monument**: This proposal would provide 404 rental units and 100 condos and a “Cove” shared workspace. (Note: this changed substantially from what was submitted to DMPED initially. Several key details were not timely provided to the PZE.) The developer also controls the parcel immediately to the east. PZE reactions included:

   ¹ The position here will need clarification vis-à-vis the position on Level 2 below.
a. **strong support** for large number of units and single curb cut on Patterson for the proposed project with the adjacent land;

b. **concerns** about the low percentage (15%) of affordable condos; the undistinguished long and unbroken façade on Patterson; the non-public courtyard; the weak architecture, especially on the corner at N St.; the low percentage of units larger than 2BR; and the plaza at N. Cap/Patterson with minimal area and no connection to the expected park at N St.

10. **Level 2**: This proposal would provide 318 rental units and 109 condos; a home for Wash. Improv Theatre; an extension to the NoMa Meander; and a 155-key hotel. PZE reactions included

a. **strong support** for large number of units; the established non-profit partner; and the hotel;

b. **qualified support** for “Patterson Walk” (Meander extension), given the potential issues with lack of light; and

c. **concern** about the lack of detail on unit affordability and size mix; aiming only for LEED Silver; the small number of units larger than 2BR; and uninspiring architecture.

11. **Overall**, PZE members had several general suggestions:

a. Established non-profit partners are much preferable to those with shorter track records and/or less clear business plans/service models.

b. Most proposals lacked sufficient affordable housing at the 80% MFI level compared to other levels.

c. Almost all proposals lacked adequate sun/shade studies or other renderings making clear the quality of the courtyards, plazas, and other outdoor spaces.

d. Any project proffering ground-floor townhouses should be required to eliminate any internal access to those units; otherwise, the benefits of activating the street are lost as residents use internal access instead.

e. Most of the proposals do not adequately explore the relationship between the proposed project and North Capitol St., both in terms of light and streetscape/flows of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

12. **Post-meeting**: The PZE chair notes the need to reconcile conflicting views on the desirability of a hotel (Republic vs. Level 2) and the value of distilling other broad statements of principle (re, e.g., bike vs. car parking, unit mix/number, connection to future N St. park, etc.).