

Minutes
ANC 6A Economic Development & Zoning Committee
7:00 - 9:00 pm, March 19, 2025
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Attending:

Committee members: Becca Buthe, Mike Cushman, Ziad Demian, Russ Greenfield, Joal Mendonsa

Commissioners: Paul Spires (6A01), Mike Velasquez (6A02), Dave Wethington (6A05)

7:00 pm Welcome/Introductions

7:01 pm Resolution of previously heard cases (None)

7:05 pm Old Business

7:12 pm New Business

Old Business:

1355-1359 H Street, NE (BZA #21254)

To combine five lots (2 facing H Street NE, 3 facing alley) and convert to a retail and eating and drinking establishment use an existing, semi-detached, mixed-use building in the NMU-4/HA and MU-4 zones.

Comments/Discussion:

- Discussed during the last meeting in January 2025- nothing has changed, but some confusion on what special exceptions they actually need.
- Support the same BZA numbers with no changes.
- Mike Velasques - did a walk along H Street yesterday - wanted clarity on which properties are included? Two properties facing H Street and three facing the alley.

Motion:

- ANC 6A send a letter of support for the project as presented to the BZA with any associated special exceptions or variances.
- Passed unanimously.

New Business:

917 Constitution Avenue, NE (BZA #21282)

To construct a second story addition to a detached garage, in the rear of an existing, attached, two-story plus cellar, principal dwelling unit in the RF-1 zone.

Presentation: Eric Teran presented on behalf of owners, showed renderings and shadow study.

- Requesting two reliefs - first time for this type, it is all by right.
- Any addition to accessory structure and lot relief (60% is limit and they are at 64%)
- They have letters from neighbors.
- Went through HPRB and was approved by staff.

Comments/Discussion:

- This will not be a rental because they already have the basement as a unit and they are only allowed two units on the property.
- Steps to the roof but you do not see a roof top deck? There is no deck, they were actually old images.

- Is there a photograph facing south across the alley? Has consideration been given to the windows being altered for privacy concerns? Privacy is an item to be considered in a special exception. They can make the windows more horizontal.
- Gail Sullivan (community member) - Is the goal for the whole block to have additions for every house? Response - not sure, Eric was only hired for this house. Each decision is an owner-by-owner developer decision.

Motion:

- ANC 6A send a letter of support to BZA for this case and any associated special exceptions provided the stairs to the roof are not constructed and that it is intended to be used by the owner and not as a rental.
- Passed unanimously.

901 H Street, NE (ZC 10-03E)

Informational presentation for proposed fast casual restaurant.

Presentation: Jessica Bloomfield (lawyer) presented, joined by Larry Spott as a representative of the owner.

- They want a zoning change for a fast casual restaurant. It is a ground floor unit of the Avec on H St.
- Property approved as PUD originally - NMU. PUD approved in 2010 for mixed use building, 419 units and ground floor retail. Approval was extended twice and it was constructed after that. 2020 had modification of PUD for a veterinary hospital use.
- Fast casual to locate in vacant ground floor retail. It is technically “fast food.” The definition is because you purchase food before sitting down - “fast food” is only permitted by special exception. Restaurant uses are allowed by right.
- There would be no changes to the exterior buildings, it would fill a vacant spot.
- They believe they meet the legal standards easily. Type of application they would file (after this meeting) is a modification without hearing. Presented all of the special use conditions and provided the justification/compliance for these.

Comments/Discussion:

- How long has it been vacant? Since construction - in 2020.
- Have they approached other businesses or restaurants to fill this spot? Yes they have been marketing since before it was complete. Soft retail, restaurants, there was a grocery store that was supposed to go in, but that fell through.
- Why change zoning for the entire property versus a portion of the property? There are other QSRs that are interested and they do not want to keep going through this lengthy process.
- Are they interested in doing more fast casual on the ground floor of Avec? Yes - it is what the customer and community wants.
- Nash and Smashed is the restaurant - 15% takeout, but goal is mostly sit down.
- What if we have a sunsetting after this restaurant? So that in case it does not make it, we do not get a McDonalds or a large chain fast food restaurant like this.
- This is part of a larger discussion in the zoning office with the City now - there are many property and business owners who are also seeking this type of change/relief.
- Would it be possible to include a definition of chain restaurant and having that be the distinction rather than where food is paid for? They do not want to prevent chains like Cava or others that do have national footprints.

- Have there been concerns from families about trash or later hours of businesses? No issues.
- Procedural and timing application - they could get on the zoning commission and meeting agenda in April.

Motion:

- Send a letter of support regarding 901 H Street provided the ANC's concerns are attached to any associated restaurant in application for the zoning change.
- Passed with one nay so it will not go on the consent agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Next scheduled EDZ meeting is April 16, 2025.