

**Report of the Economic Development and Zoning Committee of ANC 6A
April 18, 2012**

Present: Members: Missy Boyette, Charmaine Josiah, Dan Golden, Jeff Fletcher
Commissioners: Drew Ronneberg, David Holmes

Drew Ronneberg chaired the meeting.

Community Comment

There were no community comments.

Status Reports

Resolution of Previously Heard BZA/HPA Cases: No report.

Vacant Properties: No report.

Zoning Regulations Rewrite: No report.

H Street Business Liaison Report: No report.

Old Business

None.

New Business

1321 - 1323 Constitution Avenue, NE: Robert Bailey was present to give an update for the plans for this property, which have been approved by HPO. The developer passed out drawings of the previous scheme, which was presented to the ED&Z Committee in February, as well as the new scheme. The project (addition and renovation) was approved by the full ANC in February and was approved by the Historic Preservation Review Board in March.

Minor changes since the last presentation to the ED&Z Committee were discussed as follows:

1. Massing and Height - The current scheme shows a smaller third floor plan (4 feet shorter). The third floor has been pulled back 2 feet. The original scheme suggested matching the height of the adjacent building (church), but HPO preferred that the height match the adjacent 2-story building.
2. Architecture - The historic report called for clerestory windows and taller windows above the door.

The ED&Z Committee has no issues with the current scheme.

1001 H Street, NE: Representatives from Ben's Chili Bowl discussed their recent purchase of the site that used to be George's Place. Kamal, who is the second generation of the Ben's family, stated that he is aware of neighbor concerns re: trash, and he is here for community outreach.

Ben's Chili Bowl has been on U St since 1958 and has always been a family-run and community-oriented business. Ben's now wishes to expand its brand on H St. Frank White, the business development real estate agent for Ben's Chili Bowl, was also present.

The project is in its preliminary phases of plans at the moment, with interior concepts only. Representatives from Ben's would like to attend ED&Z committee meetings over the next 3 months and to incorporate ideas and suggestions into the design. Some current thoughts include:

- A proposed roof deck on the 3rd floor, with a portion covered
- An outdoor cafe on the 1st level
- A main entrance on the corner (diagonal) end of the building, in lieu of the existing H St. entrance
- An open bar kitchen with various types of seating for customers
- An entrance on H St. to go up to the bar
- A second-floor bar built around the kitchen

Kamal explained that there is no alley, but there is an easement at the rear. Trash will be kept in the back, and he will look at a way to enclose the trash area. Ben's would like to try for once- or twice-daily trash pickup, if not during the week, during the weekends. The current scheme shows that the trash will be kept on the property, just inside the property lines.

Discussion was opened up for questions. A community member asked whether the trash containers will be covered. Kamal stated that they will be; at U St, they use a compactor, and for H Street, they will use a "green" company if possible. Ben's supports eco-friendly practices. They will provide receptacles for trash and grease. Ben's intends to serve lunch, dinner and late-night food at the H Street location, intends to serve a different menu than the U Street location, and to be open 7 days/week. Regarding placement of mechanical units (compressors), they will be located on the low roof at the back and will be screened.

Kamal explained that they may excavate the basement level in order to provide back-of-house freezers and storage, possibly even locating the kitchen in the basement (grill vent would go up through the roof). In response to a community member's question about serving alcohol, Kamal stated that alcohol will not be served on the 1st floor. The restaurant may have one certificate of occupancy, but no drinks will be served for the typical customer on 1st floor (unless a customer is in a wheelchair). Kamal clarified that the H Street restaurant will not be under 24-hour operation.

The considerations for the exterior include preservation of the façade - the proposed modifications to the structure will need to support the existing facade. A community member inquired as to whether the enclosed portion on rooftop, if it is new. Kamal stated that, yes, it is, and that they would like to raise the floors on all levels, and may raise the floor and roof structure if possible to achieve this. This would result in a building height of approximately 30' maximum, similar to the gym building next door. Omar Mahmud said that he is glad to hear about raising building height. He stated that there is sensitivity from the neighbors on smells and noise and asked if there is a way to project smells toward H Street. Kamal responded by saying that he will look to the engineers to solve this. Regarding the street level patio area, Omar explained that the owners will need to come to the public space committee to get this approved, and it would be in the best interest to keep the outdoor seating area as far from residents as possible and include a sound barrier. Kamal noted this comment. Committee member Dan Golden asked that Kamal consider the queuing of persons on the

sidewalk outside. Kamal expects overflow patrons will line up on H St as opposed to 10th St. Omar mentioned the community cleanup service with H St Connection (Kamal participates in this on U ST); there is a cleanup service that deals with 10th St., and it was suggested that the owners of Ben's Chili Bowl get involved in this. Kamal responded by expressing sensitivity toward 10th St.; Drew Ronneberg will get them in touch. Kamal said that he will initiate cleanup on his own, too.

Over the next month, the scheme will undergo additional development and the owner and design team will take comments. Kamal has already met with several community members and partners to date.

1028 D Street, NE: Ray Valentine, the associate of the managing partner of the property, presented the project. He described that the property has been a vacant lot for many years. Mr. Sonny, who has been involved with construction on the property, was also present. The project proposes 2 separate units on D Street, NE. Mr. Valentine explained that the intent is to fit in to the existing context, and he stated that the owners are pleased about this project.

Mr. Valentine explained that they are here today to get ANC support. They have already met with DC's Historic Preservation Office and have been given conceptual approval; the next step is to bring the project to the ANC.

The Committee inquired as to whether there are any zoning issues with the proposal. Regarding parking, there is no existing parking on the site. Drew Ronneberg stated that they may have an issue with this for a 2-unit flat, but acknowledged that there is no alley access. Committee member Missy Boyette inquired as to whether the project will provide window wells for egress. Mr. Valentine replied by stating that there will be window wells at the front and the back of the basement unit. Mr. Valentine clarified a discrepancy between the plans and elevations by explaining that there will be a Juliette balcony at the 2nd floor. Commissioner Sharee Lawler stated that the owner has been very communicative with the neighbors, and that the neighbors are happy to see a project that fills a vacant lot.

The Committee voted 5-0 to recommend that the ANC support the concept for the redevelopment of this lot.

Drew Ronneberg explained that the next step is for the ANC ED&Z Committee to recommend support to the ANC and, if the ANC agrees, the ANC will make a recommendation in support of the project to the Historic Preservation Review Board.

Design of H Street Mid-Line Substation: DDOT has asked ANC 6A to review the design of the mid-line substation (designs can be found online on pages 41-49 from the DDOT presentation). Drew Ronneberg explained that substations are necessary in order to provide power and that they are located every so often along the line. The midline location was initially identified at the Auto Zone, but moved across the street next to Khan's.

Committee and community discussed design ideas. Commissioner Ronneberg explained that he asked for another bike share station at the substation and asked for design review by the ANC so that the substation does not look objectionable, but rather proposes a pleasing design that the community supports. DDOT unveiled these plans last week. Regarding noise produced by the substation, Commissioner Ronneberg stated that the equipment is very quiet, with only a slight hum. In the area where the substation would be located, Khan's had originally wanted

outdoor seating to extend into this space. He stated the unintended ability for this substation structure to act as buffer.

Regarding the design of the facades, community and committee members brainstormed ideas in response to DDOT's proposal and options. Committee member Missy Boyette inquired about the presence of the ticket vending machine as an option and suggested perhaps a canopy be located above, for weather protection. Community member inquired as to whether planting one of the walls would be beneficial and successful. Missy Boyette recommended that, if there is planting, it should be in the ground, along the east wall; generally, a green planted wall requires maintenance. A community member stated that public art on the wall would be preferred, others agreed. Commissioner Ronneberg stated that the bike share stations would likely be located along the east wall. Attendees discussed possibility of an artistic H Street map representation in colored brick on the east wall. Regarding the presence of advertisements or a billboard, one of the community members present warned that this could appear trashy. Missy Boyette suggested that the turn north wall of the substation be given over to Khan's, as a means to connect to the outdoor seating courtyard; for example, it could be the backdrop to the outdoor food service area. A community member inquired as to the best use of the south facade of the substation. Missy Boyette suggested a planter at grade, adjacent to the south wall, with tall plantings to mask the blank wall. Outstanding questions and comments from the discussion included the method of drainage from the roof, and the possibility of a green roof.

Commissioner Ronneberg summarized the discussion by stating that the bones of what DDOT is proposing is acceptable; the north wall should be used by Khan's (non-advertising purpose; as a backdrop to their courtyard space); the east wall design suggestion would be to do a representative H Street street pattern in colored/recessed brick; the south wall should have tall plantings adjacent.

A motion was made on the 4 summary points as noted by Commissioner Ronneberg. These were approved 5:0 by the Committee.

ANC Stance on BZA Expedited Cases: Commissioner Ronneberg explained that BZA expedited cases may be heard before ANC can receive a letter. These cases tend to be very non-controversial (i.e. lot occupancy variances, which the ANC often approves). The Committee proposed that ANC have a consent calendar. If the ANC opposes a project's expedited nature, the ANC would take action; if not, the ANC would let it lie.

In short, the policy would state that, if the committee votes to oppose a case being placed on the consent calendar, the chair of the ANC would request removal of the case from the consent calendar on behalf of the ANC; if the committee does not vote to oppose, the ANC can write a letter if the owner so desires.

The Committee voted 5-0 to recommend that the ANC support the policy as noted above.

Murray's Site at 600 block of H St NE: The developer of the H Street Murray's site was present and will share concept plans next month.

R.L. Christians Library Site: Drew Ronneberg stated that he has inquired as to the schedule for the RFP on the R.L. Christian Community Library site; he wrote a letter to which DC

responded that there will be an RFP this summer. The ED&Z Committee would want the opportunity to hear this case.

Additional Community Comment

None.

**Next Scheduled ED&Z Committee Meeting:
Wednesday, May 16, 2012
7-9 PM
640 10th St NE
Sherwood Recreation Center, 2nd Floor**