

# Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

July 5, 2017

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Re: Westbard Self Storage – DRC & Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights Concerns - Site Plan No. 820170110

This letter provides a summary of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights' preliminary concerns with respect to the proposed Westbard Self Storage project. Subsequent to the Development Review Committee meeting on July 11 we will provide our detailed review of the plans.

Our overall concern is to enhance the quality of life for the residents in the immediate vicinity. We have in this instance a juxtaposition of high-rise residential with an aging industrial park separated by the Willett Branch creek. Dense development is planned which will add numerous residents in immediate proximity to the proposed project and to the Willett Branch Greenway. The Willett Branch Greenway can be and will be a significant asset to the residents providing the green space, parkland, and water essential to a positive human experience. Little else of such character is available to them.

As time passes and the industrial property is redeveloped there is ample opportunity to create new industrial development that is complementary to and doesn't detract from the experiences of a touch of nature in general and the Willett Branch Greenway in particular. We hope that Westbard Self Storage will be one such development.

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**Stream Valley Buffer:** the applicant's site plan shows the southwest corner of the proposed storage building project as projecting into the stream valley buffer. The intrusion reduces the Willett Branch Greenway and undermines the purpose of a stream valley buffer. The intrusion is unnecessary. Additionally, it must also be borne in mind that there was a discussion with Parks present of moving Willett Branch toward the location of the proposed storage facility. Surely that needs to be taken into account.

**Access:** the site plan shows access from River Road to the Willett Branch Greenway area via what appears to be a fairly narrow pathway between McDonald's high concrete wall and the brick wall forming the north side of the Westbard Self Storage. Is this sufficiently wide for safety vehicles? Will it be an unattractive, uninviting masonry channel that is inhibiting? Does it rely

Representing the Citizens Associations of Brookdale, Chevy Chase Village, Chevy Chase West, Drummond, Friendship Heights, Glen Echo Heights, Green Acres-Glen Cove, Kenwood, Kenwood Condominium, Kenwood House Cooperative, Kenwood Place Condominium, Somerset, Springfield, Sumner, Sumner Village Condominium, Westmoreland, Westbard Mews, Westwood Mews, and Wood Acres

on access over McDonald's property? What public rights will be guaranteed? Absent an agreement with McDonald's can a good access route be planned?

**Compliance with Zoning:** The parcel where the storage facility would be built is zoned IM-2.5, H-50'. Does it meet the zoning requirements? That (if it is the case) needs to be shown.

**HOC Rear Parking Lot Assumptions:** In evaluating the proposal, it is necessary to have a concept plan with land for the Willett Branch Greenway, but not assume that the HOC building rear parking lot (on the same side of Willett Branch as the proposed storage building) will be parkland. It must be recognized that the Westwood Shopping Center sketch plan as approved subject to conditions by the Planning Board (Resolution, April 26, 2017) does not include the HOC parcels. Thus, in resolving the Westbard storage facility applications, it cannot be assumed that the HOC rear parking lot, which has not been dedicated to Parks, will be part of the Willett Branch Greenway. (This of course is very troubling). Instead, it must be assumed that there will be a Willett Branch Greenway trail and that it will go over Westbard Self Storage land to the rear of the proposed building. Will there be adequate space for the trail in that location? And, property rights for a publicly used trail must be dedicated for public use. Do plans for Westbard Self Storage fit well within the overall Willett Branch Greenway, including its trail?

**Canyon Effect:** if a parking facility and eyes-on-the-creek residential units are built immediately between the HOC building and the Willett branch what will the net effect be as viewed by a person on the Greenway with that structure on one side and a tall storage facility, as proposed, on the other? Canyon effect does little for enhancing the experience of the Greenway.

**Common Driveway:** As to the common driveway easement between the proposed storage building and the auto body shop, we have a number of concerns including whether this will be dedicated for public use, operationally whether it will be sufficient when customers of the storage facility and body shop are using it and whether there is sufficient space between the communications tower and building to allow people to walk at a location sufficiently away from the tower.

**Storm Water:** The Westbard Sector Plan seeks improvement to water quality in the Willett Branch. It is unclear how storm water from the project would be managed and if that is satisfactory.

**Parcel 177:** we understood that parcel 177 would be dedicated as parkland. That does not appear to be shown on the drawings.

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We appreciate your consideration of the above and we look forward to the DRC meeting on July 11, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,



Harold Pfohl, Chair  
Citizens Coordinating Committee  
On Friendship Heights