

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

November 17, 2017

Robert Kronenberg
Elza Hisel-McCoy
Marco Fuster
Rachel Newhouse
Andy Frank
Susanne Paul

Re: Westbard Self Storage – Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights Concerns
– Preliminary Plan No. 120170280 and Site Plan No. 820170110

Reviewing the status of the plans for Westbard Self Storage we wish to express our appreciation to the staff for their work that resulted in the developer removing the intrusion of the building into the stream valley buffer.

As noted previously, 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. The Willett Branch Greenway will be a significant asset to the residents providing the green space, parkland, and water essential to a positive human experience. Nothing else of such character is available to them in the vicinity.

Matters of further concern to us are:

Western wall of storage building: A year ago, there were some assumptions that the lower parking lot on the other side of the Willett Branch from the HOC building would be dedicated to the Willett Branch Greenway. That cannot be assumed as Regency Centers and HOC have not committed to it. Instead, in relevant part, it must be assumed that the Willett Branch Greenway will be located between the eastern boundary of that lower parking lot and the proposed Westbard Self Storage Building. We believe that given the location of the western wall of the storage building, as proposed, the Greenway will be too narrow, functionally and aesthetically, and that this deficiency will be exacerbated by the very high western wall of the proposed storage building. Another consequence of this cramped space would be to limit rerouting of the Willett Branch to slow down rapid flows in substantial precipitation events.

Access: The pedestrian access from River Road to the Willett Branch Greenway has the character of a long alley. The developer has endeavored to improve the appearance of the building wall fronting that alley. However, a narrow alley pedestrian pathway with a high building wall on the south side and the McDonald's substantial retaining wall on the north side is intimidating, not inviting. Cannot building design accommodate step backs with each story in height? Especially given the considerable underground rentable space?

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

We also have questions to pose for your further consideration with respect to not only Westbard Self Storage, but future projects.

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Storm water: The green roof is good, but shouldn't various infiltration techniques be employed in order to comply with Maryland and Montgomery County policies and objectives?

Cellar: When a cellar becomes multilevel rental space utilized in the same manner as above ground space shouldn't such space become subject to FAR constraints? If such conditions of usage exist shouldn't the required parking ratio apply to the total rentable space? i.e., above ground plus below ground?

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We appreciate your consideration of the above and we look forward to the staff report for the Planning Board hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Harold Pfohl". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Harold Pfohl, Chair
Citizens Coordinating Committee
On Friendship Heights