



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 7F
Government of the District of Columbia
One Commitment, Our Community.

Special Call Meeting Minutes (Hybrid)

February 28, 2023, 6:00 p.m.
In-Person MHCDO 3939 Benning Road NE
Streamed via Zoom & Youtube

1. Moment of Silence

A brief moment of silence was held for everything happening in the city.

2. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Holcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Also present were Commissioners Thompson-Wright, Hughes, Orendoff, and Ruff.

3. Presentations

a. NHT

National Housing Trust is a non-profit DC-based organization focused on preserving and developing affordable housing. Since 1999 NHT has developed about 10,000 units and 1,100 affordable housing units at several properties in five wards. NHT has partnered with other non-profit organizations, housing authorities, churches, and tenant associations. NHT works to achieve the goals of tenant associations. NHT has acquired the Shopping Center and 40th Street and is responsible for redeveloping those properties. This includes removing a parking covenant from the 1960s. The BZA is the first development activity milestone in the 40th Street parking. NHT hopes to bring 110-120 units at the site, in a six-story apartment complex with 1-3 bedroom homes, with rent in \$1300-\$1800.

To start development on the site, NHT must remove the 1964 parking covenant that says the lot can only be used for a parking lot. NHT looks forward to continuing the conversation after the Board of Zoning adjustments. Regarding affordable housing in the 40th Street housing complex, NHT is still reviewing how many units will be affordable. NHT would have 10,000-15,000 square feet available for retail and is still working on this aspect. Housing vouchers and section eight will be accepted for housing in the complex. Parking will be available for the unit, and residents will be able to rent monthly parking spaces. There will be about 20-25 parking spaces available. The Zoning regulation requires one parking space for every six units. NHT intends to have future community engagement with a detailed analysis of parking and other aspects of the redevelopment.



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b. Standard Development

Standard Realty owns Center Square Shopping Center and East River Park Shopping Center. Standard Realty started in September 2020 and has invested with other developers nationwide in apartment buildings, office buildings, etc. Standard bought the shopping site in October 2020 and has been focused on the center's operations. After purchasing the shopping centers, Standard hired a new property manager, Watkins Security, and extended the shopping center's hours. Standard is working with the Attorney General and MPD on joint security efforts to address safety issues. The shopping center now has 24/7 security monitoring from a security camera system. To address parking issues, the shopping center has begun towing cars that park inside the center without shopping.

Standard has extended the leases of several businesses in the shopping center, including Downtown Locker Room, Citi Bank, and the D.C. covid testing site. A contract with a new cleaning company will start in March to address trash issues. Standard also allows residents and other businesses to use available retail space for events.

4. Community Comments

- a. **NHT:** NHT has answers to only a few of the questions that were asked during their presentation. They should have had these answers before coming to speak to the community. Additionally, the parking lot is owned by Nana Stewart, and Stacey Stewart was unaware the property was up for sale. Stewart Funeral Home would have required that property. NHT should have researched the Ward 7 community before coming into the community. Furthermore, the neighborhood where the redevelopment project would take place consists of single-family homes, which should be considered.
- b. **NHT:** Parking along Minnesota Avenue is already hectic, and removing parking spaces will worsen it. There needs to be a focus on cleaning up the community instead of continuously bringing retail and apartments.
- c. **Standard:** "I understand that there is a possibility that Safeway may be moved. We have a lot of children and elementary schools. I don't want to see this community become one of those deserts where we don't have food. What will you do to ensure we don't have to take a bus or taxi to get groceries?"

Response: "I don't believe the plans are laid. There will be a grocery store in East River Park, and I can't speak about the specific grocery store in the shopping center. The current Safeway is still expected to be there until the new shopping center is built. The notice of leave will have to be 120 days, and Safeway is expected to stay through all of 2023."



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- d. **Standard/NHT:** "Is Standard in the process of buying any other properties in this ward that we do not know about? I would like to know, for those building units, are we just coming to the meetings to see what you're doing, or are you including any of the residents in your committees or forums? I am completely disappointed that in all of the \$850 million packet, to hear the comment that Stewart was never even considered a staple in our community is disheartening. I've just been relocated from my home because of a new building. Staples of the community should be given respect and a seat at the table."

Response: Standard is not in the process of buying additional properties in the community.

- e. **Standard:** "The surface level issues with the crime need to be addressed, and the security needs to be there longer. The shopping center doesn't close until 10 pm. We want to be involved, and we want to give ideas."

- f. **Standard/NHT:** "This sounds like a done deal. How will you get on the list for these apartments for \$1800 a month? Also, there are two houses over there. Have you approached the homeowners?"

Response: "It will probably be 18-24 months before construction starts for the apartment, six months before construction ends, applications will be accepted, and a month before the apartment opens, leases will be signed."

- g. **NHT:** "I'm a little behind on a six-story apartment building without guaranteed off-street parking for the residents. In 1963, most houses had one car. This is 2023, and you have 2-3 cars for almost every home. If you have 120 units with a minimum of two cars per unit, that's 220 cars. One parking place for every six units is crazy. You will build those units not for the people who live there. You don't care. That's our problem. We met about 3-4 years ago about cleaning up McDonald's. It's just as bad as ever. There's much talk, it sounds good, but nothing gets done."

- h. **NHT:** "My concern is around the environmental piece to the project when it comes to urban heat. When you build many buildings, you have to deal with increased heat. What are some of the sustainability pieces you have in place?"

Response: "We started the sustainability part of our project ten years ago. We started building solar panels on every one of our properties eight years ago. We integrate green aspects into every one of our buildings."

5. Commission Comments

Chair Holcomb: "The Commission passed a resolution in the meeting that pushed the hearing date back because we expressed to them that the engagement that had been done



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wasn't up to par. That is how this hearing tonight came about. As it relates to what the future needs to look like from an accountability perspective, that is what is meant to be done this evening. I believe it does not stop this evening, but it begins this evening.

Commissioner Ruff: "I did ask for this meeting tonight once we went into our executive meeting because I realized there would be some ANCs that were impacted. One of the things I was looking at was the traffic that was coming. I do have worries about vouchers being accepted and people living on top of each other as well."

Commissioner Orendoff: "I think we need to go back to the details of this and discuss it in a smaller density. I will fight with 7F03; this body is coming together to fight for the community."

Commissioner Ruff: "I agree that there isn't enough parking space, meaning people will park in our space. I'm willing to work with these gentlemen in my community to address these issues. What I want to see with these buildings is young entrepreneurship and young black people coming here and having a coffee shop. I also would like to see if we could utilize the parking lot. When we lost where DGS is now, we lost fresh vegetables and food markets. We don't have that anymore with this new development coming. We still want to keep some value and historical factors in our community."

Chair Holcomb: "We don't want BZA to provide the covenant, and nothing happens on the site, or the site sits idle with the potential of a sale. In the promise of our community, there's more work that has to be done; in previous conversations with the developer, we (the Commission) said that there needed to be consistent community engagement through a community advisory task force known as the Northeast Heights Community task force with monthly meetings and updates at ANC 7F meetings. We also mandated that there needs to be a sense of community opportunity with the sight of this period of transition and beyond. Furthermore, we mandated that there needs to be an opportunity for the community to be heard on the development so that this evening is not the first and the last time this has happened. Furthermore, thinking about the development itself, there needs to be opportunities pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction, meaning housing for all levels, options for small businesses, and a center for everyone who has served in this community for years. Lastly, a commitment to the arts, community impacts, young people, seniors, and the community. We stand for that as a commission and community and what we desire to see.

6. Commission Business

a. Formal vote on BZA Case #BZA 7468B

Commissioner Orendoff moved to consider a formal vote on BZA Case #BZA 7468B. The motion is seconded by Commissioner Ruff. As the SMD impacted by the case, Chair Holcomb believes the Commission should not take a formal position on the matter at



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hand as it relates to the BZA but should urge the BZA to push NHT to reduce the number of units and/or provide 3 ½ parking spaces for the number of units being built, and address other matter relating to traffic, construction, and environment. The motion passed with 3 in favor and 2 against (3-0-0).

7F01- Yes

7F02- Yes

7F03- Yes

7F05- No

7F07- No