

RESOLUTION OF THE
FRIENDSHIP NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
REGARDING ODMPED'S DRAFT RFP
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
TENLEY-FRIENDSHIP NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY/JANNEY SCHOOL SITE

October 21, 2007

WHEREAS on October 8, 2007, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development ["ODMPED"] provided members of the Tenleytown and Friendship Heights communities with a "Community Review Draft" of a Solicitation of Offers for development of the Tenley-Friendship Neighborhood Library/Janney Elementary School site; and

WHEREAS ODMPED requested that all comments be submitted to the ODMPED by 1:00 pm on October 22, 2007; and

WHEREAS the Council has not yet declared land at this site "surplus" and made it available for disposition; and

WHEREAS matter of right development with current zoning can accommodate at least 800 new housing units in the Tenleytown area and at least 1,800 new housing units in the Friendship Heights area, all of which is in the geographic area served by the Tenley-Friendship Neighborhood Library and the Janney Elementary School; and

WHEREAS the Comprehensive Plan calls for careful management of development to address infrastructure constraints and that adequate infrastructure capacity is ensured as growth occurs; and

WHEREAS except for the portion of the site that is within 100 feet of Wisconsin Avenue, the Janney/Tenley-Friendship Neighborhood Library site is zoned residential, R-1-B, and the Comprehensive Plan directs transit-oriented development to commercially zoned land, not residentially zoned land: "To avoid adverse effects on low and moderate density neighborhoods, most transit-oriented development should be accommodated on commercially zoned land." [306.8]; and

WHEREAS Janney Elementary School, with three large "demountables" on its property to provide extra classroom space, is one of the most overcrowded schools in the entire DC Public School system; and

WHEREAS ODMPED has not provided any analysis to demonstrate that this site can accommodate a development project while maintaining the ability of the Janney Elementary School and the Tenley-Friendship Neighborhood Library to expand to meet future needs; and

WHEREAS the Comprehensive Plan specifically calls for the stringent protection of open space in and around the community's institutions; and

WHEREAS the entire portion of the site which lies more than 100 feet from Wisconsin Avenue falls in the "Conservation Area" land use designation on the Generalized Policy Map, which calls for "maintenance of existing land uses and community character" and where if changes occur, they would be "modest in scale"; and

WHEREAS the Comprehensive Plan, in laying out the policies for development near Metrorail stations, is clear in stating that policies in favor of mixed use centers are constrained by other land use policies: "Policy LU-1.3.1: Station Areas as Neighborhood Centers: . . . This policy should not be interpreted to outweigh other land use policies which call for neighborhood conservation. Each Metro station area is

unique and must be treated as such in planning and development decisions. The Future Land Use Map expresses the desired intensity and mix of uses around each station, and the Area Elements (and in some cases Small Area Plans) provide more detailed direction for each station area.” [306.10]; and

WHEREAS the Comprehensive Plan directs development efforts toward Metrorail station areas that have particular characteristics that Tenleytown and Friendship Heights do not share:

“Policy LU-1.3.2: Development Around Metrorail Stations: Concentrate redevelopment efforts on those Metrorail station areas which offer the greatest opportunities for infill development and growth, particularly stations in areas with weak market demand, or with large amounts of vacant or poorly utilized land in the vicinity of the station entrance. Ensure that development above and around such stations emphasizes land uses and building forms which minimize the necessity of automobile use and maximize transit ridership while reflecting the design capacity of each station and respecting the character and needs of the surrounding areas.” [306.11],

and similarly:

“Beyond these core principles, station area development policies must respond to the unique needs of each community and the unique setting of each station. Some station areas wrestle with concerns over too much development, while others struggle to attract development. Moreover, the District’s role in facilitating transit-oriented development must vary from station to station.” [306.5]

WHEREAS the draft Solicitation, in effect, asks Offerors to bid on prototype/generic requirements for the library as well as for the elementary school’s expansion and modernization, rather than the actual needs of each facility; and

WHEREAS the construction of the library will be delayed substantially if the Offeror will be incorporating the library into a larger structure, and where the delays would be even more substantial if the Offeror will be seeking PUD approval and/or a map amendment; and

WHEREAS library construction costs will increase beyond the amounts already allocated for library construction if there are substantial delays in the commencement of construction; and

WHEREAS the construction of a large mixed use project on the library and Janney site will increase the likelihood that Janney students will not be able to remain on-site during some portion of the construction process and the draft Solicitation did not request information as to whether the students would be able to remain on-site throughout the process, and the draft Solicitation did not request that the Offeror provide information on the plans for swing space on-site, if the Offeror claims that the students will be able to remain on-site throughout the construction process; and

WHEREAS the Comprehensive Plan calls for meaningful citizen participation in decisions about land use and development, as in the following Guiding Principles:

“Confidence in government begins at the neighborhood level. It is built block-by-block, based on day-to-day relationships and experiences. Meaningful citizen participation and quality, responsive neighborhood services are essential to sustain successful neighborhoods.” [218.7] and

“Public input in decisions about land use and development is an essential part of creating successful neighborhoods, from development of the Comprehensive Plan to every facet of its implementation.” [218.8]; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Friendship Neighborhood Association opposes the issuance of an RFP prior to actions by the Council to declare this land surplus and available for disposition and a complete study of the area's future library and school needs and the ability of this site to accommodate current and future needs if such a development project proceeds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Friendship Neighborhood Association requires that the RFP be revised to ensure sufficient safeguards to guarantee that the panel will not only determine which of the proposals best serves the public interest, but also determine that the proposal that best serves the public interest is also superior to timely completion of the already-funded construction of the Tenley-Friendship Neighborhood Library and completion of the Janney Elementary School expansion and modernization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Friendship Neighborhood Association requires that the selection committee that reviews all RFP responses must include at least one representative chosen by ANC 3E, at least one representative chosen by ANC 3F, at least one representative chosen by the Janney Elementary School PTA or SIT and at least one representative chosen by Friends of the Tenley-Friendship Library; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Friendship Neighborhood Association requires that the draft Solicitation be revised to reflect the following:

1. A requirement that the Offeror demonstrate the project will retain the necessary amount of open space at this site as required by DCPS educational specifications for elementary schools;
2. A requirement that the Offeror present a credible, detailed timeline, to include not only construction milestones, but also the timing of all required public and private agreements that must be executed as part of this process, and that the Offeror be required to submit documentation, including examples of projects in with comparable complexity that completed each stage in the projected amount of time, to demonstrate that the proposed timeline is a realistic timeline for the project;
3. A requirement that the Offeror demonstrates that the Offeror has the financial capacity to begin construction when final approvals are obtained, and that there would be no delays relating to the need to obtain financing;
4. A requirement that the Offeror state whether it anticipates that the Janney students will not be able to remain on-site during every phase of the construction process, and for each phase of the construction process where the Offeror anticipates that the Janney students will be able to remain on-site, the Offeror should be required to provide plans for safely continuing Janney operations on-site.
5. The Land Use and Zoning section of the draft RFP, Section 2.3, should be revised to make it clear that most of the site is in the Conservation Area of the Generalized Policy Map, where "maintenance of existing land uses and community character is anticipated over the next 20 years," and "where change occurs, it will be modest in scale and will consist primarily of scattered site infill housing, public facilities, and institutional uses," and where "major changes in density over current (2005) conditions are not expected but some new development and reuse opportunities are anticipated."
6. The District Requirements section, Section 3.3, of the Solicitation should include a representative selection of policies that apply to this site, and in particular, should include policies relating to the need to protect open space, protect low-density, stable residential neighborhoods, ensure that adequate infrastructure is available to accommodate projected growth, and the clear statement that policies encouraging development by Metrorail stations should not be interpreted to outweigh land use policies

that call for neighborhood conservation. The District Requirements section should include the following policies in the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Council in December 2006:

(a) Policy RCW 2.2.2 (d) and Policy RCW 2.2.2 (e) which apply specifically to the Tenleytown Metrorail Station Area, and state that development in this area should “protect and preserve existing low density residences in the vicinity, and the surrounding institutions and local public facilities from the adverse effects of development,” and “maintain heights and densities at appropriate levels, with architectural design that is sensitive to the area’s topography relative to the District” [2312.9]; and

(b) Policy RCW-1.1.9: Protecting Common Open Space: “Protect the large areas of green space and interior open spaces that are common in and around the community’s institutional uses and its older apartment buildings, such as Cathedral Mansions and the Broadmoor. Where these open spaces are recognized to contribute to the integrity of the site or structure, stringent protection from inappropriate infill shall be maintained.” [2308.10]

(c) Policy UD-2.2.9: Protection of Neighborhood Open Space: “Ensure that infill development respects and improves the integrity of neighborhood open spaces and public areas. Buildings should be designed to avoid the loss of sunlight and reduced usability of neighborhood parks and plazas.” [910.16]

(d) Friendship Heights and Tenleytown are stable, transit-oriented neighborhoods, and their conservation should be ensured during the coming years. Thus, several core issues must be addressed as plans for any of the sites around the Metro stations or along the corridor move forward. Any redevelopment along the corridor should respect the scale of existing neighborhoods, . . . The scale and height of new development on the corridor should reflect the proximity to single family homes, as well as the avenue’s intended function as the neighborhood’s main street. This means an emphasis on low- to mid-rise mixed use buildings rather than high-rise towers or auto-oriented strip development. 2312.6

(e) Managing Growth and Change: Guiding Principles: “Redevelopment and infill opportunities along corridors and near transit stations will be an important component of reinvigorating and enhancing our neighborhoods. Development on such sites must not compromise the integrity of stable neighborhoods and must be designed to respect the broader community context. Adequate infrastructure capacity should be ensured as growth occurs.” [217.6]

(f) Creating Successful Neighborhood: Guiding Principles: “The residential character of neighborhoods must be protected, maintained and improved. Many District neighborhoods possess social, economic, historic, and physical qualities that make them unique and desirable places in which to live. These qualities can lead to development and redevelopment pressures that threaten the very qualities that make the neighborhoods attractive. These pressures must be controlled through zoning and other means to ensure that neighborhood character is preserved and enhanced.” [218.1]

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Friendship Neighborhood Association requires the Solicitation include weights for each of the factors that will be considering in comparing the Offers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Friendship Neighborhood Association requires that inconsistencies in the requirements in the current draft be resolved in favor of the more stringent requirements, and that the Solicitation include a statement that any inconsistencies in the requirements given in different sections of the Solicitation shall be resolved by applying the most stringent requirements in the document.