

Open Letter to Mayor Adrian Fenty

May 6, 2008

Dear Mayor Fenty,

We, the undersigned, request your attention to a process we see as unfair and unbalanced with regard to the rights of residents to protect our quality of life, our considerable investments in our homes, and our desire to live in the District of Columbia.

We have filed a protest under the rules of the Alcohol and Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) against the plans of a restaurant/bar named Town Hall (2218 Wisconsin Avenue N.W.) to build a 40-seat outdoor roof deck which will be open until 1 a.m. on weeknights and 2 a.m. on weekends.

Town Hall has the unfortunate problem of being located in close proximity to a densely populated residential area of Glover Park. The noise of 40 people eating and drinking and talking late into the night cannot be underestimated. Our peace and quiet is already quite compromised by the late-night bar scene in Glover Park. In addition, the expansion of seating at Town Hall will place further pressure on our already impossible parking situation.

The ABRA process of requiring parties either to come to compromise through mediation or place the outcome into the hands of the ABC Board members/ABRA commissioners at a hearing puts us at a distinct disadvantage.

- If we remain opposed to the existence of the roof deck, there's no room for compromise. If we go to a hearing, the burden of proof falls on us. Proving potential disruption of peace, order and quiet, potential loss of housing values, and other potential detrimental effects will be not only difficult but expensive.
- The process presumes the right of a commercial establishment to increase its business and profitability however it chooses. (We've suggested that if Town Hall were more welcoming to families, it would get more business without the roof deck.)
- The process requires residents to accommodate ourselves to an untenable situation, to settle on limiting hours or seating or to negotiate sound abatement and to put up with a high impact problem our mixed-use neighborhood should not have to deal with.

We contend this is unfair to us and not good for the District of Columbia.

Our homes on Hall Place and W Place not only have the highest property tax assessments in Glover Park, but also house a wealth of young families, including at least 21 children, 14 of whom are under the age of five, many sleeping in bedrooms just a small backyard away from Town

(MORE)

- 2 -

Hall. As a direct result of the roof deck proposal, several of us have begun to consider moving out of from the District. Losing young families and revenue (as a result of home sales in a bad market bringing down appraisals across Glover Park) is not in the District's best interest.

While we fully intend to make our case as best we can before the Alcohol Beverage Control Board, we request that you work with the Board to assess how its processes can be more fair and balanced towards residents. For example:

- Why isn't the burden on Town Hall to prove it needs the roof deck and that the outside dining and drinking late into the night and increased patronage won't disturb the neighborhood or impact parking?
- Even though two ABC Board members suggested that we could resolve our problem with a zoning overlay, our protest hearing is scheduled for June 25, allowing us no time at all to explore or enact an overlay. Is that fair?

Once the roof deck is built and approved as part of the attached to the liquor license, it will exist for all time under whatever management owns the premises. It has the potential to change forever the nature of Hall Place, one of the most beautiful streets in the District, and to impact our commercial district by encouraging the competition to increase late-night bar activity on roof decks.

We urge you to encourage ABRA and the ABC Board to consider the children and families of Glover Park as equally, if not more, valuable to the District of Columbia as the commercial establishments with whom we share our neighborhood. Our neighborhood's health and well-being is at stake.

Thank you for anything you can do to help. We are your constituents as follows:

Sign Print with address
