

Michael Means
206 S. Belmont Ave.
Richmond, VA. 23221
540-818-1005

RE: Ordinance No. 2016-297 | 12/12/2016

Dear President and Council Members,

My Name is Michael Means, and I am a resident of the 200 block of Belmont, at Belmont and Parkwood. As a resident in this neighborhood, I am opposed to the repeal of ord: 84-19-28. I do not see the proposed ord., 2016-297, changing the special use from assisted living to rental apartments, as being in the best interest of the neighborhood.

The Master Plan of the city lists as one of its general policies: to “encourage the development of a range of housing types, styles, and prices” (p100). I believe that assisted living is a housing type that the current 3003 Parkwood fulfills, one that the city, if it really wants to “encourage the development of housing” that meets the needs of ALL of its citizens — including those who already call the Parkwood home — might take a more serious look at. Might this not be a better opportunity to improve assisted living and/or transitional living for those in this community?

I believe that the Parkwood, as an assisted living facility, IS better serving the community, although I wouldn't disagree that there may be improvements that could be made to better serve its residents. But I also know that many of the residents have woven themselves into the fabric of Carytown. I personally have no objections to my neighbors at the Parkwood. I believe that community is about diversity, and my neighborhood is more diverse because of my current neighbors at 3003 Parkwood.

I'm particularly curious about who this new project is for: who will be the tenants of these proposed 32 multi-family units? How much will rents be? Will there be affordable housing included? What are to be the conditions of the new special use ordinance?

We know that the developer wishes to use tax credits that would preclude the project as condo units: but it seems that currently the only permitted options are assisted living or single-family units — I ask you to maintain this designation and vote NO on the proposed ord 2016-297.

3003 Parkwood is an anomaly in the neighborhood, mostly in regards to the size of the building, which is surrounded by single-family houses per the R-5 Single Family Residential designation it sits in; and I oppose granting such a radical special use permit, adding 32 units in this area, for several more practical reasons. But I will also add that I think the original special use permit 84-19-28 only works due to the nature of

that permit and the fact that this is an assisted living use: having an assisted living facility is significantly different than having 32 individual apartments, most of which would be 1B. I imagine that the target demo as tenants are individuals who are much more active, probably entertain more, and, in my opinion, are probably more likely to increase traffic in this congested area than current residents of the Parkwood.

I'll note that the special use Ord. 84-19-28, was passed with the condition that residents NOT be permitted to keep vehicles on the premises (condition 'C,' page 4). I believe this demonstrates that even at the time of the original special use permit, parking and traffic were a concern—and they certainly are today.

Parkwood is a narrow, one way street, as is Grayland, which runs parallel to it; and Belmont, which intersects with Parkwood, is a two-way street, but it's still quite narrow (just ask any of the bus drivers who navigate the #4 Route). I'm concerned about the increased parking and traffic a 32 unit project would bring. I know it has been pointed out that other similar projects, multi-family, are in close to proximity to 3003 Parkwood, but most are not located in such a congested area: most are located on larger, two-way streets and most of those areas do not also have to regularly contend with the level of delivery truck traffic we see in this area of Carytown. *I might also just add that retaining the trees was a part of the original 84 ord., but the current multi-unit plan that ord. 2016-297 would permit (sheet L100) indicates the removal of Elms and Hemlocks on the property.

I know that the proposed plan notes the addition of 27 parking spots along the alley in the back of the Parkwood (10 or so of those are designated "compact"), but will this be a "condition" of the ordinance? I believe it must: if you insist on approving this ordinance, which I hope you will NOT, ample parking must be a priority. **Also, if you insist on granting this extreme special use permit, the alleys in Carytown, especially those running parallel to Parkwood, from Sheppard to McCloy, should be improved, paved, and maintained. The potholes are massive craters, really, and if you approve this plan, traffic will be abysmal, forcing, I'm sure, many drivers to use these alley ways.**

* [If any new housing were to be implemented at this site, it should be "improved" assisted living facilities; or, it should be a permitted single-family project; if a condo unit project were to be approved, it should be much lower in number (much less than 32 units) and more in line with the number prescribed by the current parcel density (which is "low density" land use that allows for up to 7 units per acre). The proposed 47 units per acre at 3003 Parkwood is too extreme for this area. **R-5 is a single-family Residential District, and I believe it should remain so; please vote NO on ord. 2016-297.**

Sincerely,


Michael Means