

COALITION FOR PLANNED
ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT, INC.

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89004-006-014

April 18, 1978

Mr. James O. Gibson
Assistant City Administrator
for Planning and Development
District Building
1350 E. Street, N.W.
Room 401
Washington, D..C. 20004

Re: Rockefeller Estate
Development: Request
For Traffic Controls

Dear Mr. Gibson:

The Large-Tract Development Task Force currently has before it a request for approval of plans for the development of the Rockefeller Estate. If these development plans are approved, communities surrounding the Estate will experience greatly increased levels of traffic and additional safety hazards. To ameliorate these impacts, the Coalition for Planned Environmental Development, Inc. ("CPED") requests implementation of the traffic controls described in this letter in conjunction with any approval of the Rockefeller Estate development plans. The proposed controls have been developed in cooperation with the developer and are an integral part of the plans for the development.

Planning for the Rockefeller Estate development has been a unique, three-way process involving active participation by affected citizens through CPED, the City and the developer, Rozansky and Kay. The objective of this process, which CPED initiated, has been to insure that the Rockefeller Estate development will be shaped not just by economic considerations but by environmental, cultural and aesthetic values, and by the input of the surrounding communities. Rozansky and Kay has cooperated in this unique process by entering into a formal agreement with CPED designed to mitigate the environmental impacts of the development on the Estate and the surrounding communities. It remains for the City to ameliorate the traffic impacts of the development by implementing the traffic controls requested herein.

To place CPED's traffic requests in their proper context, we will briefly review below how CPED came to be organized and how it has worked with the City and the developer in planning for the Rockefeller Estate. We will then describe the specific traffic controls which the City is requested to implement and the process by which these requests were developed.

Organization and Purpose of CPED

CPED is a D.C. non-profit corporation comprised of interested citizens in the Foxhall Road, Berkeley, Palisades, Spring Valley, Wesley Heights and Foxhall Village areas. The organization has well over one thousand members, and it is supported largely by membership dues and contributions. The broad, long-term purpose of the organization is to cooperate with other private groups and government agencies in working for planned environmental development throughout the District of Columbia.

CPED was formed in October 1977, following press reports that the Rockefeller Estate had been sold to Rozansky and Kay. The reports suggested that the developer was planning a maximum density, tract-type development which inevitably would have destroyed the natural beauty and exceptional terrain features of the Rockefeller Estate and surrounding areas, and in many other ways detracted from the natural and human environment in a large area of the City.

CPED's Proposed Large-Tract Development Procedures

In addressing the potential problems raised by Rozansky and Kay's proposed development, CPED immediately became aware that these problems were by no means unique to the Rockefeller Estate. The Municipal Planning Office ("MPO") had previously identified a great number of comparable large-tract properties throughout the City that were likely to become targets of real estate developers. Accordingly, CPED initially focused its efforts on developing procedures which would give the City greater control over large-tract development. Working in cooperation with its Architect/Planner, Richard Ridley, and MPO representatives, CPED drafted formal large-tract development procedures and submitted them to the City on November 29, 1977. The Mayor promulgated these procedures in modified form on March 16, 1978, and thereby created the Large-Tract Development Task Force.

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The CPED/Rozansky and Kay Contract

CPED then turned its attention to applying the environmental standards embodied in the City's new large-tract development regulations to the Rockefeller Estate. Planning experts representing CPED, the developer and MPO drew up a list of specific environmental and developmental priorities for the Rockefeller Estate, and the parties utilized these criteria in outlining a comprehensive agreement to govern the development. After several months of negotiations, CPED's Board and the developer reached a tentative agreement on the terms of a formal contract in May 1978. The CPED membership approved the contract at two community meetings in early June, and the parties executed the contract on June 15, 1978.

A copy of the CPED/Rozansky and Kay contract, which we hope will be a model for similar agreements in the future, is attached hereto at Tab 1.

Development of CPED's Proposed Traffic Controls

While the CPED/Rozansky and Kay contract focuses primarily on impacts of the development within the perimeter of the Rockefeller Estate, it recognizes the external impact of increased traffic on surrounding communities. Thus, in Sections I(A)(1) and II(B), the agreement provides for an equitable distribution of traffic among four access points. In addition, the agreement provides in Section I(A)(3) that CPED and the developer will cooperate in actively seeking City implementation of external traffic controls. These provisions were developed in consultation with MPO officials and have their full blessing.

The subject of external traffic controls was considered in depth at the meetings of CPED's membership on June 1 and 8, 1978, and thereafter was addressed by affected citizens in numerous written comments and suggestions to CPED's Board. Because of the great expression of interest in external traffic controls, CPED retained professional traffic experts to work with Mr. Ridley and the developer's experts in refining the proposals which CPED expected to submit to the City. The CPED Board met on a number of occasions during 1978 and early 1979 to consider the experts' recommendations and mailed status reports to CPED's entire membership on December 8 and March 1. These status reports elicited further comments and suggestions from affected citizens, and all such comments have been taken into consideration in developing CPED's final traffic proposals.

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In addition to frequent communications with its members and other citizens in the affected communities, CPED has consulted on the issue of external traffic controls with official representatives of the affected communities, including Councilmember Shackleton, Advisory Neighborhood Council 3D and various citizens associations. The formal endorsements of community representatives are submitted herewith at Tab 2.

Summary of CPED's Proposed Traffic Controls

The traffic control proposals which have emerged from the process described above are illustrated in Exhibits I and II. (See notebook pocket.)

Exhibit I illustrates (a) the projected incremental traffic on local streets surrounding the Rockefeller Estate which would be generated by the project (number stated in parentheses), (b) the total traffic, existing and incremental, expected at the completion of the project (number stated in boxes), (c) the distribution of incremental traffic among local streets (expressed as percentage of total incremental traffic), and (d) nine traffic impact locations where traffic controls are required (described in numbered circles).

Exhibit II identifies the nine specific traffic controls which CPED requests to mitigate the expected traffic impacts. The proposed controls are consistent with traffic management practices in the District of Columbia.

Following is a summary of the nine traffic impacts illustrated in Exhibit I and the corresponding traffic control proposals illustrated in Exhibit II:

1. Dexter/Foxhall Intersection -- Increased traffic to and from the project via Dexter Street will increase turning movements at the intersection of Dexter Street and Foxhall Road where limited visibility and the contour of Foxhall Road already present a serious safety hazard. CPED requests the installation of speed control signs north and south of the intersection on Foxhall to ameliorate these problems. Since Foxhall Road traffic occasionally is controlled by radar patrols, we would suggest that the signs be "Speed Controlled by Radar" signs which are generally more effective than speed limit signs.

2. Foxhall Access Point -- Traffic entering and exiting the project at the Foxhall Road access point will encounter a poor visibility problem aggravated by Foxhall's narrow right-of-way, the absence of adequate speed controls and excessive existing traffic volumes. CPED has considered a number of ways of dealing with this problem at the access point on Foxhall Road but has rejected these approaches as infeasible. We request instead the installation of a stop sign and no parking signs on the Foxhall access road, and the installation of a stop light at W Street as described in Paragraph 3 below.

3. Foxhall/W Street Intersection -- This dangerous, blind intersection has been the scene of many serious accidents in the past, and numerous requests have been made for the installation of a four-way stop light. The problem has recently been aggravated by the construction of an eight-foot high brick wall at the point of the intersection. It will be worsened further by the 30 percent peak hour traffic increase on W Street which is expected to result from the Rockefeller Estate development. CPED submits that a four-way stop light at this intersection is a critical necessity and should be installed immediately.

4. 46th and Ashby Streets -- Peak hour traffic on 46th Street is expected to increase by nearly 115 percent due to incremental traffic from the project. CPED requests that this problem be addressed by the installation of no parking signs where the access road joins 46th Street, and a stop sign on Ashby at 46th Street.

5. 48th/W Street Intersection -- Greatly increased traffic and turning movements on 48th and W Streets will aggravate the existing safety problem at this dangerous, blind intersection. CPED requests the installation of four-way stop signs at the intersection to mitigate these problems.

6. 48th/Calvert Street Intersection -- 48th and Calvert Streets would suffer the most severe impacts of all local streets as a result of expected incremental traffic from the project. Traffic on 48th and Calvert Streets would be more than double the present load, and both streets would carry a significantly disproportionate burden of incremental traffic. In fact, the incremental traffic burden would be greater on 48th and Calvert Streets than on either Foxhall Road or 49th Street. To avoid

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these excessive and inequitable impacts, CPED requests the installation of a traffic barrier at the intersection of 48th and Calvert Streets (i.e., at the top of Calvert Street) to stop all (non-emergency vehicle) through traffic. Such a barrier would equalize the burden of incremental traffic -- without causing any undue inconvenience to residents or through travelers.

7. 49th/Calvert Street Intersection -- Increased traffic flows on 49th Street will worsen the existing safety hazard in the area of the Calvert Street intersection due to the configuration of, and absence of any traffic controls along the entire length of 49th Street. CPED requests that this problem be ameliorated by the installation of three-way stop signs at the 49th/Calvert Street intersection.

8. 49th Street Access Point -- Increased traffic and turning movements, as well as a potential parking overflow onto 49th Street, require the installation of a stop sign and no parking signs on the access road.

9. Dexter/49th Street Intersection -- Traffic generated by the project will increase turning movements at the intersection of Dexter and 49th Streets. CPED requests the installation of a stop sign on Dexter Street to mitigate this problem.

Conclusion

Throughout the unique, three-way planning process for the Rockefeller Estate development, it has been clear that the success of the process depends on the willingness of all three parties to recognize their respective responsibilities as well as the benefits they are likely to receive. Rozansky and Kay and CPED have both made major concessions in order to realize the benefits of cooperative planning. The City also stands to benefit by reason of increased tax revenues, and we believe the City has an attendant responsibility to take reasonable action to mitigate the impacts of the project on surrounding communities. CPED thus calls upon the City to implement the traffic controls outlined in this letter.

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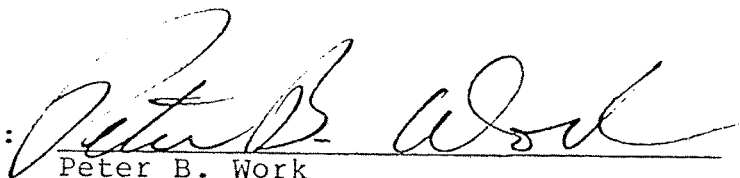
CPED requests the opportunity at an appropriate time to meet with the Task Force in order to make an oral presentation of our traffic control requests.

Respectfully submitted,

The CPED Board:

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| Cici Carusi | Tommy Jackson |
| Jeff Dwyer | George Pughe |
| Barbara Franklin | Barbara Robinson |
| Fisher Howe | John Wallach |
| Peter B. Work | |

By:



Peter B. Work

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cc: Rozansky and Kay