



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
**FROM:** Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director Development Review & Historical Preservation  
**DATE:** May 10, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** **BZA Case 18209** – 100 Stoddert Place SE

### I. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) **recommends approval** of the special exception relief requested in accordance with § 408.1 to allow a public recreation and community center use larger than 40,000 square feet, and § 2116.6 to allow required parking in the front yard, for this use proposed at the existing Benning-Stoddert Recreation Center site.

### II. AREA AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address:	100 Stoddert Place SE
Legal Description:	Square 5407 Lots 0807
Ward:	7A
Lot Characteristics:	The irregularly shaped lot encompasses over 612,000 square feet (14.05 acres) with frontages along Stoddert Place and B Street SE with no alley access.
Existing Development:	Existing Benning-Stoddert Recreation Center facility includes: an 11,527-square foot building with a gymnasium, multi-purpose room, toddler room (formerly a daycare center) and computer lab; four outdoor tennis courts; four outdoor basketball courts; a baseball field; trails and picnic area; and parking for 10 vehicles (refer to Figure 1).
Zoning:	<i>R-5-A</i> – a public recreation and community center that exceeds 40,000 square feet requires special exception approval by the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) per § 408.1.
Historic District:	Fort Circle – Fort Chaplin Park, Fort Circle Connecting Park System
Adjacent Properties:	To the north in the <i>R-5-A</i> district are undeveloped lots between the subject property and East Capitol Street SE; to the south are two-story row dwellings along C Street and Cape Place SE in the Dupont Commons Planned Unit Development (Zoning Case No. 01-12C), and the campus of the SEED School of Washington DC in a <i>R-2</i> district; undisturbed woodlands to the east in the <i>R-2</i> district; and two-story row dwellings along Burns Street and Burns Place SE also in the Dupont Commons PUD to the west.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character:	Predominantly moderate density residential uses.



### III. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

**Applicant:** The DC Department of Real Estate on behalf of the Washington Tennis and Education Foundation (WTEF).

**Proposal:** WTEF proposes to erect another public recreation and community center (indoor tennis and education facility) on a portion of the existing recreation center tract.

The District would subdivide the Benning-Stoddert Recreation Center tract into two lots of record. The 296,087 square-foot (6.8 acres) lot would include some undisturbed property and the area where the existing outdoor tennis and basketball courts are located. In 2008, the District Council approved a ground lease between the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the WTEF that allows the WTEF to construct the proposed tennis and education facility on this record lot. The pre-engineered metal building would have a gross floor area of 62,424 square feet; 50,637 square feet for six indoor tennis courts and nearly 12,000 square feet in smaller rooms that would be available for organization academic, programming and administrative purposes. The location of the parking in the front yard of the new facility would form an extension of the existing recreation center parking area. The existing outdoor courts would subsequently be replaced by nine outdoor tennis courts and two outdoor basketball courts. The applicant indicated that construction would begin in the fall 2011, if the fundraising goals are met.

The remaining open spaces, forestland, recreational facilities and parking area would become the second record lot. Exhibit 1 illustrates the approximately configuration of the lot and the locations of existing and proposed facilities.

Under § 199 a public recreation and community center is defined as “(a)n area, place, structure or other facility under the jurisdiction of a public agency.” Because the new facility would be constructed and operated by WTEF which is a non-profit organization, OP asked what makes the proposed use a “public recreation and community center.” In response, the applicant indicated:

- This would not be a private tennis club because the facility will be open to all DC students (on a space-available basis).
- The facility would be located on land owned by the District and administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between DPR and the WTEF that was approved with the land lease stated the terms for “... a co-location project to provide programs and services to children and youth at no cost to the community.” Under this agreement, all project conceptual plans and specifications are subject to DPR approval. The WTEF and DPR facilities, though separate, are required to be architecturally integrated. The WTEF is required to make the new facilities available for the exclusive use of the DPR on a scheduled basis for adult and senior programs, and other activities including tennis tournaments. The WTEF and DPR would partner for promotion and marketing purposes.

In light of this information, OP concluded that DPR and the WTEF would share jurisdiction over the proposed facility.

**Relief and Zoning:** Public recreation and community centers are allowed as a matter of right in an R-5-A district. However, recreation centers with 40,000 square feet or more require special exception approval in accordance with § 408.1 and other requirements listed below:

Standard	R-5-A Requirement	Subject Property	Proposed Development	Relief Required?
Minimum Lot Area (§401.3)	As prescribed by the Board per § 3104	612,027 s.f.	296,078 s.f.	No
Minimum Lot Width (§401.3)	As prescribed by the Board per § 3104	595 ft.+	390 ft.+	No
Height (§400.14)	45 ft.	Unknown	43.7 ft.	No
<b>Gross Floor Area (§408.1)</b>	<b>40,000 s.f (maximum)</b>	<b>11,785 s.f.</b>	<b>62,424 s.f.</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Floor Area Ratio (§402.6)	0.90	Unknown	0.21 (62,424 s.f.)	No
<b>Lot Occupancy (§403.3)</b>	<b>20%</b>	Unknown	<b>21%</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Yard, Rear (§404.1)	20 ft.	Unknown	64 ft.	No
Yard, Side (§§405.9)	8 ft.	Unknown	12 ft.(east) 20 ft. (west)	No
<b>Parking (§2101.1)</b>	<b>1 space / 2 courts, 5 spaces / court and 1 space / 2,000 s.f.<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>10 spaces<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>14 spaces (minimum 24 spaces required)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Yes</b>
Loading (§2201.1)	1 service/delivery space 20 ft. deep <sup>4</sup>	Unknown	1 service/delivery space 20 ft. deep	No

Based on this information, the submitted proposal required relief from lot occupancy and parking requirements, in addition to the referenced gross floor area limitation.

In response to these findings, the applicant submitted modified plans. The proposed record lot was enlarged to approximately 324,700 square feet to reduce the lot occupancy to the allowable 20%. Onsite parking was increased to 26 spaces which is more than the required amount. These changes eliminated the need for the referenced lot occupancy and parking relief. However, upon further review, the applicant discovered that relief is needed to locate the required parking in front of the building instead of in the side or rear yard as provided under § 2116.2.

#### IV. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

##### Consistency with § 408.1

*408.1 A public recreation and community center shall not exceed a gross floor area of forty thousand square feet (40,000 sq. ft.), unless approved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment as a special exception in accordance with the provisions of § 3104.1.*

The relief is required because the proposed building would exceed the allowable gross floor area by over 22,000 square feet.

Regarding whether the proposed use would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of Zoning Regulations and Map, the use is currently allowed in this zone district as a matter of right. The intent of this provision was to minimize the impact of centers that would be larger than 40,000 square feet. The new facility would be constructed on existing parklands that are currently occupied by the same use. No change would result in the current overall land use onsite or in residential and institutional land uses on the surrounding properties. The use intensity associated with the larger portion of the proposed building, occupied by six tennis courts, would be small relative to its size. Traffic would continue to enter and exit via Stoddert Place SE from East Capital

<sup>1</sup> Requirements under § 2101.1 for tennis court, basketball court and public recreation and community uses

<sup>2</sup> Parking spaces currently on the Benning-Stoddert Recreation Center site

<sup>3</sup> Total required parking = 8 (for 15 tennis courts) + 10 (for two basketball courts) + 6 (balance of center)

<sup>4</sup> Public recreation and community center with more than 30,000 square feet of gross floor area

Street, a principal arterial. No other local streets would be impacted. Otherwise the modified proposal would meet current regulation standards for setbacks, height, lot occupancy and parking.

Regarding whether the proposed use would tend to adversely affect the use of neighboring properties, the existing and proposed tennis and basketball courts would be about the same distance away from the surrounding land uses. The proposed new building would be further away; approximately 240 feet from the nearest SEED School building to the south and over 1,000 feet from the nearest residence in the Dupont Commons PUD to the west. The mature trees and landscaping retained under this proposal would also help to buffer the neighboring properties. Although the tennis court portion of the building would not be soundproofed, court noise to the outside would be further reduced by the insulation on the interior walls.

When OP inquired about what provisions the WTEF would make to provide additional parking for tennis tournaments and other large events onsite, the response was the tournaments would be between students from the participating schools. Though no other large events are planned by the WTEF, the MOA stated that the proposed facility shall be made available, "... for the exclusive use by DPR twice annually for the purpose of DPR sponsored tennis tournaments." It would be useful for DPR to explain how the additional parking demand generated by these anticipated events would be addressed.

#### Consistency with § 2116.6

*2116.6 The Board shall determine that it is not practical to locate the spaces in accordance with § 2116.2 for the following reasons:*

- (a) Unusual topography, grades, shape, size, or dimensions of the lot;*
- (b) **The lack of an alley or the lack of appropriate ingress or egress through existing or proposed alleys or streets;***
- (c) Traffic hazards caused by unusual street grades; or*
- (d) **The location of required parking spaces elsewhere on the same lot or on another lot would result in more efficient use of land, better design or landscaping, safer ingress or egress, and less adverse impact on neighboring properties.***

Stoddert Place is the only public right-of-way that provides vehicular access to the site. Neither the existing tract nor proposed record lots have or would have access to an alley that could serve as an alternative entry point. Locating the required parking in front of the proposed use, as an extension of the existing recreation center parking area, would place all the available parking resources in close proximity to the point of ingress/egress.

Relocating the proposed parking area to the side or rear yard of the proposed facility would require clearing additional undisturbed forestland that would be retained under the current proposal. Shifting the parking area into the rear yard could reduce the natural buffer between this facility and the SEED School of Washington. More isolated parking would also require more vigilant security. Overall, the current proposal is the more efficient use of the property and a better site design.

Based on the above analysis, the modified application meets the standards for the requested special exception relief. OP therefore recommends approval.

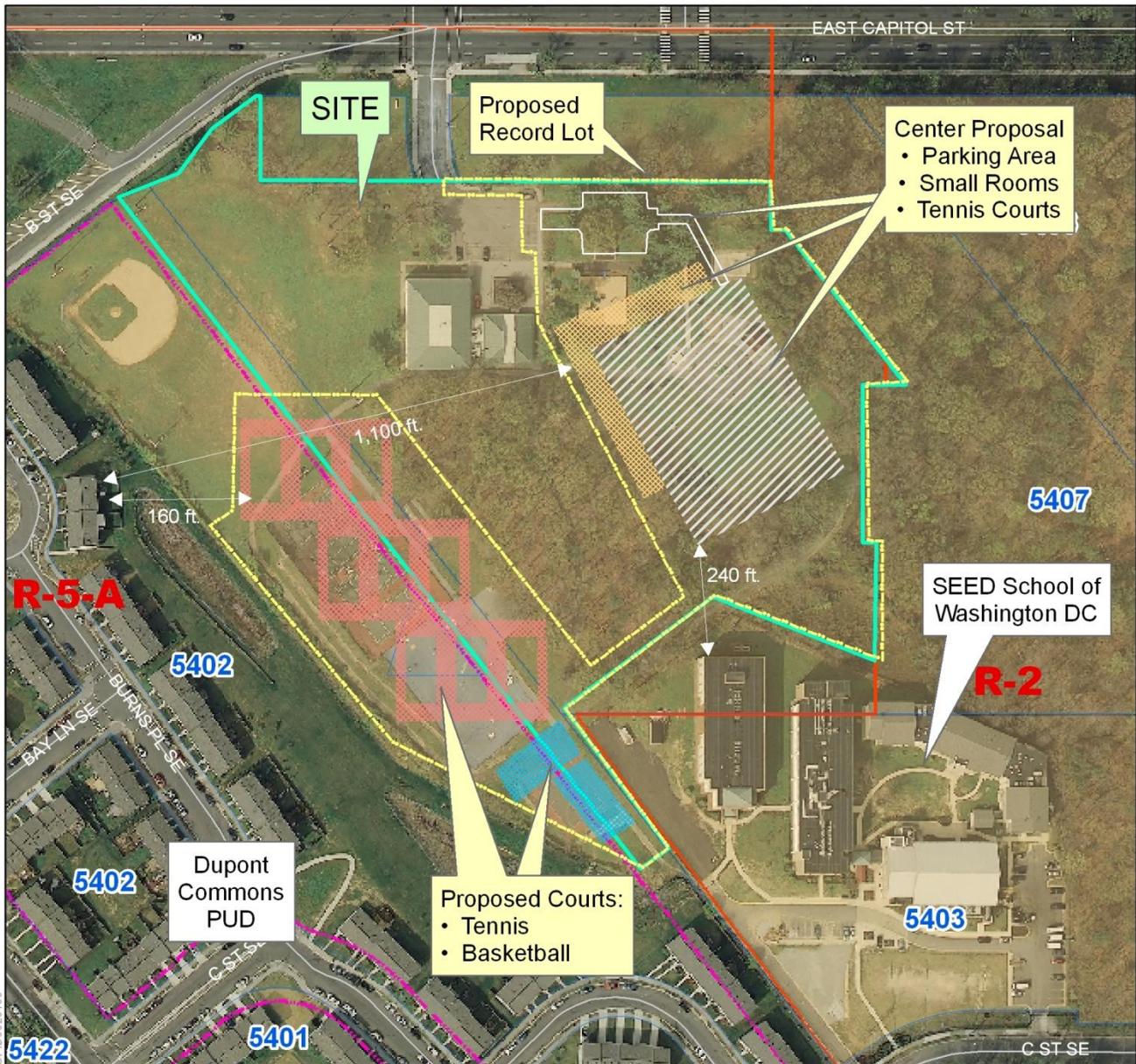
## **V. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 7A discussed this proposal on several occasions. At the meeting on May 10, 2010, residents voice a number of concerns about flooding of the park site, adequate parking and vehicular circulation onsite, critter control during construction, the potential

impact on residential neighborhood parking resources surrounding and the loss of a basketball court. Ultimately the ANC voted unanimously to support this request.

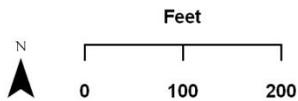
To date no final ANC resolution has been added to the case record file.

Arthur Jackson, Case Manager  
JS/afj



OPIID0020109

**BZA Application No. 18209**



Government of the District of Columbia  
Office of Planning ~ April 28, 2011

This map was created for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

**LEGEND**

-  Property Squares
-  Street Centerlines
-  Water
-  Parks