



July 18, 2017

Mayor Tarter and Members of the City Council
Chair Wodiska and Members of the Planning Commission
City of Falls Church
Falls Church, Va. 22046

Subject: TO17-01 - Rezoning Historic Homes Owned by Columbia Baptist Church

Dear Mayor Tarter, Members of City Council, Chairman
Wodiska and Members of the Planning Commission:

The Board of Directors of the Village Preservation and Improvement Society has reviewed proposed ordinance TO17-01. This proposed ordinance would rezone several historic properties on Maple Avenue from R-1A to R-1B and T-1 zones, and insert a new R-1B lot into the existing R-1A district. Based on the documents on the City website, the purpose of the rezoning is to add a new residential lot that is would not be permitted under current zoning, and to permit parking in the backyards of the historic properties on Maple Avenue that the Columbia Baptist Church owns.

After carefully reviewing the public documents, the Board concludes that there appear to be no public benefits to this elaborate rezoning. Moreover, the “proffers” are not very substantial; several are already required by City code, including maintaining the historic homes and landscaping the Columbia Baptist parking lots.

We are particularly concerned with several precedents that would be set:

1. The City would not be following the letter and intent of the Historic And Cultural Conservation District ordinance;
2. The City would use T-1 zoning to allow significant backyard parking in a residential district, and
3. The City would allow a new R1-B lot in an R1-A district.

We strongly recommend that the Council and the Planning Commission decline to move ahead with this ordinance as presented.

Sincerely,

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Mark Gross

President, On behalf of the Board of Directors

cc: City Manager
Director of Planning