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November 29, 2014

The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde
Bishop
Washington National Cathedral
3101 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Reverend Budde:

We write to request, on behalf of the Dupont Circle Citizens' Association (DCCA), that you meet with our leadership to discuss options for rebuilding St. Thomas Church. Our purpose is to examine with you the possibility of the City, or a private entity, purchasing some of the land for continued public use. This request is the result of a resolution taken at a monthly membership meeting of our Association on Monday, November 3. Our Board supported this membership resolution unanimously at its November 13 meeting.

A few years ago, DCCA, along with many unaffiliated neighbors, endorsed plans for rebuilding St. Thomas. Although those plans entailed near-total loss of the green space, the building proposed met expectations for compatibility with the Dupont Circle Historic District. Unfortunately, those plans proved financially non-viable.

This past spring, the community was given to understand that a land sale to private developers had been authorized, without consultation with neighbors or the community at large. This arrangement contemplates not only loss of the green space, but an out-sized (at least 6 stories) condominium building fronting on Church Street on the land to be sold. While allowable under the law, such un-neighborly treatment was unexpected and is undeserved.

Since the announcement of the sale, the Reverend Nancy Lee Jose has adamantly refused to discuss options. In May 2014, DCCA members voted to formally ask the City to pursue a park purchase option. Recently, Council Member Jack Evans convened a meeting where discussion of sale options was declared "off the table" by Reverend Jose.

You may not be aware that the D.C. Office of Planning has identified the Dupont Circle neighborhood as sub-standard for access to green space, on a

per-capita basis. The virtual nonexistence of undeveloped property in the historic Dupont Circle area makes the St. Thomas land sale a rare opportunity for the city and the neighborhood.

Some members of the St. Thomas vestry and the congregation have indicated sympathy for neighbors' unhappiness with the planned destruction of the green space contemplated by the latest rebuilding scheme. They advised us to request a meeting with the Diocese.

Accordingly, we ask that you meet with us to discuss a mutually beneficial alternative for financing a new St. Thomas Church building without destroying a beautiful green space in the historic Dupont Circle neighborhood.

To respond to this invitation, please feel free to contact me or any of the other people listed in the chart below.

Sincerely,



Ramon Estrada, MBA
President

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Ramon Estrada	President	412-9434 (c)	raestrada@hotmail.com
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Lance Salonia	Chair, Regulatory and Historic Preservation Committee	258-4966 (c)	salonia@aol.com
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