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**Date:** July 16, 2007 12:23:18 PM EDT

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**Subject: The reason you did not appreciate the singular quality of the Positano building ...**

Dear Marlene and Shondell and Jeff,

What an excellent meeting we had together at your office this past Tuesday with Mal Rivkin. I very much respect the thinking and caring you bring. I was troubled, though, by my failure to express properly certain points, particularly the **fundamental significance of clustering in order to preserve some existing buildings (and businesses.)**

You will recall that **the "big idea" is that the "project" is the Woodmont Triangle.** Individual buildings are pieces of a larger puzzle. Government's job is the big-picture and the long-term. No one else is able to address this. If government gets the big things right, the private sector will get the small things right.

**The two big tools that are key to achieving success are the clustering (TDR) tool and the Amenity Fund.** The text that Jeff is set to write is critical to ensuring that these tools will in fact deliver that success. At this moment, sadly, damage is being done. The reason is that staff at M-NCPPC, although competent and well-intentioned, suffer from having been "in the forest" for so long that all they see are trees. **What is so critically needed right now is a clear vision of the forest.** At our meeting last Tuesday I suggested that Roger Lewis, FAIA, Washington Post columnist (Shaping the City) and recently retired professor of Architecture from the University of Maryland, is the ideal person to fill the void.

I have focused my initial efforts on Fairmont Avenue and on Veterans Park for two reasons. (You know I am an "implementation planner:" my Lafayette Centre project on 20th and 21st Streets in downtown DC required a new zoning tool: the "One-Step PUD" which I "created" in 1977; my 500 New Jersey Avenue project required significant zoning variances -- my contribution there was unprecedented imaginative use of an existing zoning tool; ...)

1) **combine theory with application**: it is much easier for people to understand theory if they can see it / experience it.

2) **a unique set of critical physical elements are right here**:

- There is a **variety of building heights and types** along Fairmont Avenue that represent the historic, funky character of the Woodmont Triangle with at least one retail business in particular (Positano restaurant) whose retention will deliver a range of important public benefits
- **Veterans Park has the magical location to become the "Town Square"** but it needs a retail context with appropriate architecture to bring it to life (following the example of Bethesda Row!)
- There is **a very large county parking garage** in the middle of the block with entries on both Woodmont Ave. and Old Georgetown Road that **can become a much more valuable contributor to the quality of life** in the Woodmont Triangle than it is with very little effort.



When I talked about how the clustering provision should work, I said that "preserving standard method base density on a sending site was logically contradictory to the spirit and the intent of this tool" you had trouble with this and I have anguished over my failure to explain that to you properly.

As I was going through my photos, it became clear that the reason you did not appreciate the singular quality of the Positano building is that **the public realm context for this building is so miserable that it distracts and destroys this most important little building**. I enclose them here and look forward to talking with you about how close we are to accomplishing magic, and Jeff, Mal and I will help you write it.

Here are 3 key enclosures (a picture is worth a thousand words:)

- Positano sidewalk presence/Public realm problem.JPG
- ht variety 3,2,1 story w/public realm prob.jpg
- Positano superb street presence/fix sidewalk.JPG

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