

June 6th Docket Proposal 115 S, Union Street SAY NO!

Cheryl Amyx <camyx115@comcast.net>

Fri 5/5/2017 9:28 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Cc: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Planning Commission and Justin,

As a resident of Prince Street, I recently came aware of the proposal submitted to rezone 115 S. Union Street into a hotel and restaurant.

I will not be in town on June 6th to appear in person, but respectfully request that my voice and those of my neighbors on the 100 block of Prince Street be heard.

The proposal to rezone the court and offices into a hotel and restaurant, is unacceptable to the residences of our historic street. We already have to cope with restaurant noise and trucks blocking S. Union Street delivering goods to local restaurants. The noise, parking and lack of privacy would be a complete travesty to our lifestyle. Our house backs up to the terrace proposed as a restaurant/ and out-door dining on Wales Ave. Wales Ave is already a thoroughfare and is often blocked to home owners due to restaurant trucks and deliveries. To have people hanging out till late hours in essentially the back porch of the residences of the 100 block would be beyond comprehension and restrict our quality of life.

The residences on Prince Street pay an inordinate amount of money in taxes. We deserve the right to privacy and a decent living existence in this city. Our block is being squeezed more than any other in the City. We need to be heard.

The Waterfront plan never proposed additional hotel in this quadrant. Allowing Special Use Permit #2017-42 and #2017-43 to proceed would be a legal nightmare for the City.

Please, do not approve this request. It does not follow the proposed City plan and infringes upon the our quality of life.

Please let me know that you received my plea.

Cheryl Amyx
115 Prince Street
Alexandria VA 22314
703-898-2785

Ladies and gentlemen;

My wife and I live at 113 Prince Street, immediately adjacent to 115 S. Union, the property for which your staff has recommended that a special use permit for hotel operations be issued.

Before issuing the permit, I respectfully urge you to consider the following facts that your staff either minimized or ignored altogether:

1. The issuance of this special use permit will have a hugely negative impact on the \$15,000,000 to \$25,000,000 worth of the beautifully restored and lovingly maintained eighteenth century residences that line the entire north side of the famous cobblestoned 100 block of Prince Street, one of Old Town's signature locations. By issuing this permit under the conditions your staff has proposed, you will be permitting the construction of an elevated dining area that will overlook all of the gardens on the north side of the block and utterly destroy their privacy and usability. Nowhere else in Old Town — nowhere — have you permitted a commercial dining area to be elevated so that the diners look down into the homes and gardens of a dozen neighborhood residents, and yet that is exactly what your staff is proposing now, and worse, in one of the very finest blocks in Old Town.

2. The applicant's assertion that "no significant noise is anticipated" from this outside dining area is simply laughable and underlines their disinterest in the people who live in the neighborhood. That your staff seems to have accepted the applicant's outright silly assertion without questioning it is simply incomprehensible and can only support an argument that the entire process of reviewing the application was considerably less than rigorous. Endorsement of your staff's recommendation would guarantee that what is now a line of beautifully maintained private gardens would not only have people peering down into them from early morning until late at night, but those garden areas would be overwhelmed for fifteen hours a day, seven days a week, with the hubbub of a restaurant, the uproar of a barroom (as the outdoor area is to be utilized for "happy hour and other functions"), the noise of clattering dishes and silverware, and quite possibly far worse. You would rob us forever of a primary feature of our very valuable homes: the privacy and peace of our gardens.

3. Another important feature of our homes is our off-street parking, but the only access to our parking areas is from Wales Alley, a narrow, one-lane alleyway barely wide enough for a single car. While I was gratified to see that your staff has recommended that a condition be placed on the permit that the hotel not use Wales Alley for any loading or unloading, the experience of residents with the commercial enterprises that now have access to Wales Alley has been uniformly unpleasant and has led to numerous calls to the Alexandria Police. I cannot imagine how much worse it would make our lives here if you grant this special use permit to a sixty-four room hotel and a hundred and thirty-five seat restaurant occupying the whole of the north side of Wales Alley and operating from 5:00am to midnight daily.

4. The same people who are applicants for this permit previously allowed their workmen to block Wales Alley for days on end while landscaping work was being carried out on the very same property for which you are being requested to issue a permit. When I insisted their workmen move their trucks, the men just laughed at me. It was not until the Alexandria Police were called that the trucks were moved, and even then only temporarily.

5. The restaurant that sits at the east end of Wales Alley has for years treated Wales Alley as a private parking area and loading dock. In my many attempts to get vehicles blocking Wales Alley moved by the Union Street Public House, I have been cursed, given the finger, and threatened, but never was any vehicle moved until whatever business it was conducting was completed and the driver felt like moving it. Never, not once, did the Union Street Public House take any responsibility for the vehicles or admit that anyone with the authority to tell the vehicles to move was present in the restaurant. Again, only through the intervention of Alexandria Police have we even been able to clear Wales Alley of commercial vehicles.

It is simply a sad fact that the commercial enterprises taking over more and more of what once was a quite residential neighborhood have little regard for Old Town homeowners. On the contrary, we are a nuisance. We stand in the way of them attracting yet more visitors into the area.

The residents of Old Town have no way to protect ourselves and the value of our homes but to appeal to government; and if government fails to protect us, then we are left to seek redress in the courts.

If the Planning Commission determines to grant this special use permit for 115 S. Union, the residents of the 100 block of Prince Street respectfully insist you impose the following two conditions:

1. All commercial activity conducted by the permittee must be contained within the walls of their building and no outdoor dining, drinking, or other utilization of outdoor spaces for any commercial purpose or activity whatsoever can be permitted.
2. Wales Alley can not be used for any commercial purpose and no vehicle connected with the permittee may enter Wales Alley for any purpose whatsoever, including but not limited to dropping off or picking up passengers or goods, making deliveries, providing service or maintenance, or engaging in construction or decoration work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jake Raymond Needham
113 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

FW: 115 S Union St Special Use Applications

Alex Dambach

Tue 6/6/2017 1:39 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Alex Dambach, AICP
Division Chief – Land Use Services
City of Alexandria
301 King Street, Rm 2100
Alexandria, VA 22314
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alex.dambach@alexandriava.gov
www.alexandriava.gov

From: Tom Canfield
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2017 1:38 PM
To: Alex Dambach
Subject: FW: 115 S Union St Special Use Applications

Alex-

I just received this letter from the owner of The Ice House @ 110 South Lee, re: the 115 South Union Case –

Is there a way to get it into the record for PC?

THX

Tom

From: marko1 [<mailto:marko1@bellsouth.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2017 10:28 AM
To: Tom Canfield
Subject: 115 S Union St Special Use Applications

To: Alexandria Planning Commission

Re: 115 South Union Street Special Use Permit Applications #2017-0042 & #2017-0043 Public Hearing: June 6, 2017

Issue: Truck loading from the alleys

Please be aware that there already exists issues with large truck loading access from both the north and south alleys to 115 S. Unions Street, running east - west, thru to South Lee Street. The size of trucks using these alleys are too large and have been hitting the buildings and damaging the cobble stones and brick pavers. My building has been hit multiple times and the City has had to repair the cobblestones and brick in the north alley. I addressed this issue back in 2014 to the City Transportation Department, but it was never resolved. The primary problem vehicles appear to be the food and beer delivery trucks. This problem could become exasperated if not addressed during your consideration of the above special use applications. Please advise me how the City has or is intending to resolve the truck loading issue as it exists and as proposed. As you know, there is a balance that needs to be struck between growth of use and preservation of the past. Thank you.

Mark Olivola
Owner: The Ice House, 110 South Lee Street
910-617-5617