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Approve Special Exception for Bancroft rooftop mechanical equipment

Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Board of Zoning Adjustment to grant, as expeditiously as possible, Special Exceptions for the rooftop air conditioning units to be installed at Bancroft Elementary, 1755 Newton Street NW.

Why: The regulations require, according to the Zoning Administrator, that the screening around rooftop mechanical equipment be set back “a distance equal to its height” from rooftop edges. Three of the five rooftop air conditioning systems planned for Bancroft Elementary fall short of that requirement, and so require Special Exception approvals. Two of those three units are well within the area of the school complex, and so have no consequences outside the area of the school. One is located alongside the 3400 block of Mount Pleasant Street, and will be visible to the nearby residents.

The topography of the area is such that, even if set back according to the regulation, these screens will be plainly visible from the street, and the adjacent residences. In fact, because the houses are built on top of a hill, well above street level, the residents of those homes will have a full view of this rooftop installation, regardless of the setback. The required setback is, in fact, immaterial to the situation, and granting the Special Exception will have no adverse effect.

ANC1D judges that granting this Special Exception “will not tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property”, and furthermore asks that it be granted as expeditiously as possible, as the principal interest of the nearby residents is to have this major construction project completed, as soon as possible.

Resolution passed, 5 to 0 vote, at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANC1D on May 22, 2018, with a quorum present. Voting “yes”: Commissioners Karaffa, Stewart, Karrer, McKay, Romero-Latin. A quorum for this commission is three; five commissioners were present.