

EXHIBIT NO.

4

9

11-17-01

Statement from Wm. E. Clayton
Docket Item #9, 11/17/01
Diagonal Parking on Notabene and
Old Dominion north of W. Glebe

Mayor Donley and Council members: I am Bill Clayton, traffic chair for North Ridge Citizens' Association. Thanks for having this hearing on diagonal parking for parts of Old Dominion Boulevard and Notabene Drive.

After the clamor of suppositions and scare tactics raised against our proposal, I can hardly recognize it. But it is still quite simple: It proposes to provide substantial additional parking on two streets whose residents desperately need more parking spaces. In doing so, it will ease parking pressures that have brought complaints to me from my North Ridge neighbors.

Council has an opportunity to improve the lot of drivers on Notabene and Old Dominion and ease tensions involving North Ridge. This proposal would create about 70 new parking spaces. The plan evolved in a constructive partnership between Rich Baier of the Transportation and Environmental Services Department and North Ridge.

But this idea is not the only component of our approach to traffic problems. Attached to my statement is a list of other initiatives, to be attempted with the help of Mr. Baier and his staff. They include exploring additional parking for Presidential Greens in its wide alleys, trying to increase the spaces available to Beverley Hills Manor, working on a pamphlet – in two languages – explaining parking laws, exploring the possibility that the VEPCO lot might be made available, discussing occupancy code enforcement with city officials, and trying to find additional small pockets of parking throughout the area.

All of those will take time – AND we will pursue them. The quickest, least-expensive idea is the diagonal parking plan before you today.

Let's look at the objections from Lenox Place and others.

They say we are moving a problem from our neighborhood to theirs. That turns things on their head: We are providing parking so that people don't have to search for parking blocks away and walk back to their homes. In doing so, we ease the parking pressures in North Ridge. And, we reduce the danger of pedestrians crossing West Glebe at night.

They say the additional parking will bring more crime and litter to the area. Well, I tell you, we are not changing the PEOPLE who live in the apartments of Notabene and Old

Dominion; we are just changing where they can find parking spaces. In doing so, I think we can improve their daily living.

I direct the Council's attention to the map. A few blocks away from this project are the streets of Milan and Florence. Both have head-in parking – denser than diagonal – on BOTH sides of the streets. I have not heard Lenox Place or any of the other opponents of our plan get up a petition to eliminate that head-in parking because of congestion, crime, or litter.

A leader of a Lenox Place gathering recently said diagonal parking will give gangs a haven. He said the streets will become what he called a “Gang War Zone.” And he said with one-way streets, gang members would only have to look in one direction to spot an approaching police cruiser.

However, the police have told us they see no problem with the parking plan.

Lenox Place says it has made sacrifices, so North Ridge should have to make some, too. I am not aware of a sacrifice Lenox Place has made. Its residents have a fear that their property values will drop if their neighbors on the other side of their fence get extra parking. In fact, IF the neighbors beyond Lenox Place's “No Trespassing” and “Tow-Away” signs get more parking, the congestion of people walking through Lenox Place and around it from blocks away to get to their homes on Notabene and Old Dominion will actually diminish.

Lenox Place and other opponents said we did not consult anybody until late in the game. We have faxes with Lenox Place, which took the lead in opposing this plan, going back 14 months. Other neighborhoods have been represented at Lenox Place meetings at which this plan was criticized. And early in 2001, when the matter first got on the docket of the Traffic and Parking Board, notices of that hearing were spread in the neighborhoods – but then we withdrew the matter because of Lenox Place's objection. The problem worsened dramatically, so we revived the plan five months ago. Lenox Place has also steadfastly objected to another part of the plan – to have additional parking along West Glebe Road. We laid that idea aside, hoping that would please Lenox Place enough to gain their support of the diagonal parking. But they were not moved.

They said the problem would go away if occupancy codes were enforced. Well, Mr. Mayor and Council, look at the map. There are about 25 apartment buildings in the parking-plan area, each with several apartments. There would still be a need for more parking spaces, even with the laborious and long-term process of enforcing occupancy codes.

You know one thing they did NOT say? The opponents of our plan did not come up with anything that promised relief, that we were not already pursuing. Lenox Place's board meets in Beverley Hills Methodist Church. The recent Lenox Place rally against our plan

was held in the church. But you know what Lenox Place has NOT said? Not one word of recognition that the Church on which they depend so much will benefit from the parking plan.

Putting in the diagonal parking will require that the two blocks we are talking about become one-way: Old Dominion one-way south from Four-Mile to Notabene, and Notabene one-way from Old Dominion to Four-Mile. We have checked with police, the fire department, the school bus routing office, the garbage collection people, and ALL say this presents no big problems for them. We have letters of support from major apartment owners in the area – ARHA, Johnson Properties, Community Lodgings, and ALL say they like an idea that brings more parking right to the doorstep of those who need it. And we have a letter from Beverley Hills Methodist Church supporting the plan.

In assembling a list of residents who indicated they might speak in behalf of our plan, I found not a one who said he or she did not like the idea. I can furnish you a list of those with whom I conversed – some of them you have heard today.

Regardless of the hubbub, you get back to the simple idea at the heart of this proposal: Providing more parking for two streets whose residents need it. Please give this idea a try, and know that I will be working with Mr. Baier and his staff in exploring additional, longer-term ways to ease the parking woes of the area. Thank you very much.

*** **

(Addendum to Bill Clayton presentation in behalf of North Ridge Citizens' Association)

Other initiatives, to be developed with property owners, the T&ES, police, and volunteers:

**** The alleys of Presidential Greens.** We have been talking with Greens ownership about possibly creating many new parking spaces in the alleys between Russell and Executive and between Executive and Elbert. (Challenge: This is mid- to long-term, but Greens ownership seems receptive.)

**** Dominion Virginia Power.** We and T&ES have discussed with Dominion Virginia Power, without success so far, the possibility that part or all of the old "VEPCO lot" could be made available to public parking. (Challenge: The company is cool to the idea, and the lot is distant from the greatest parking need anyway.)

**** Beverley Hills Court and Bev. H. Manor.** We are talking with their owners to clear up a dispute whose solution may make 10-12 spaces available in Manor's lot for Court's residents. (Challenge: Beverly Hills Court ownership balks.)

**** Construction.** We will urge the city, and work with its officials, to see if a City-private partnership could develop a new parking building. (Challenge: This may be long-term, expensive, difficult.)

**** Pockets.** With T&ES, we have identified some areas that possibly could be turned into small parking pockets within the apartment complexes of the affected neighborhood. (Challenge: This is long-term, involves varied ownership, would require curb cuts and development of paved areas.)

**** Regulations.** An easy one. North Ridge would develop a pamphlet in two languages explaining the parking laws, so people would understand when you can have somebody towed, what distances to allow for driveway entrances, etc.

**** "Grandfathered" buildings.** We and T&ES or Planning and Zoning can see if some apartments in the area, which now are "grandfathered" against the requirement for off-street parking, are up for sale, which would open the possibility for proffers for new owners to provide more parking. (Challenge: Long-term, difficult.)

**** Code.** We will continue to talk with code enforcement officials to see if the density of some apartment buildings can be reduced by enforcement of occupancy laws. (Challenge: Very difficult, long-term, no direct promise of relieving parking pressures.)

**** Traffic calming.** We are working with T&ES to set priorities for the many requests for traffic calming on neighborhood streets. (Challenge: There are many requests, and budgets do not cover them all.)

* * *