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July 12, 2011

Mayor Baroukh, Vice Mayor Snyder and Members of City Council

City of Falls Church

300 Park Avenue

Falls Church, VA 22046

RE: Resolution Amending Special Exceptions SE03-0136 and SE03-0137, for 513 W. Broad Street (The Byron) to Allow for Professional Offices and Office Uses (TR11-20)

Dear Mayor Baroukh, Vice Mayor Snyder and Members of City Council:

The Falls Church Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Committee has reviewed the staff report and accompanying materials and recommended approval of the Special Exceptions requested by Mr. Simon Lee. The Chamber's Board of Directors approved endorsement of the Special Exception on Tuesday, July 12.

While the Chamber recognizes the concerns relayed by the City's Economic Development Office regarding the marketing of the space in question, it also finds Mr. Lee's concerns to be valid. Further, the Chamber is generally supportive of flexibility regarding commercial space as flexibility enables property owners to adjust accordingly based on market conditions.

More successful businesses in the City will help the City's tax revenues immediately and assist the City in attracting other businesses. Vacant spaces have the opposite effects.

The space in question has been vacant for approximately five years and there is no difference between the fiscal impact of retail/restaurant versus office use for the space. Further, the amendment would expire in ten years time, thereby making the space available for retail/restaurant use at that time if the market is more amenable. Our Chamber sees no reason for blocking the requested amendment and encourages the Council to approve it and thus provide the property owner with the tools necessary to fill the space as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Michael Ankuma  
Chairman