

High Rise Hotel

Business Challenge/Environment

A nine-story hotel in downtown Washington, D.C., needed approval from the zoning commission to add two additional floors and make extensive renovations, including to the exterior of the building. The influential Advisory Neighborhood Commission opposed the project and called our client's application a misuse of the Planned Unit Development zoning overlay zone.

Outcome

Faced by strong disagreement from neighbors closest to the site and a growing recognition of local support for the project by city officials, the ANC reversed its opposition. The expansion project won all necessary approvals.

Our Approach

Our Goals:

- Overturn the ANC opposition.
- Build support for the project from area residents and businesses.
- Present the hotel as a good neighbor.
- Achieve a favorable opinion from the ANC to the zoning commission.

Our Actions:

- With residential neighbors difficult to contact in access-restricted buildings, we reached out to building owners and management to explain the neighborhood benefits of the project and gain their assistance.
- Identified potential supporters through micro-targeting and reached out to them by letters, telephone calls and door-to-door.
- Hosted meetings for local businesses and residents at the hotel and in their own buildings, avoiding opportunities for confrontation by opponents.
- With the assistance of newly recruited supporters, we disputed the claims of ANC activists (who did not live in the immediate neighborhood) via outreach, letters, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings.
- Maintained contact to continually reassure our most ardent supporters, while continuously targeting the most vocal opposition.
- Our campaign prominently stressed the fact that stakeholders who lived closest to the project were supporters, while opponents lived further away and were pursuing an agenda 'real' neighbors did not endorse.