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10/25/2018

San Francisco Planning Commissioners
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

RE: Case #2016-00378CUA – Whole Foods 365 at 1600 Jackson Street
Letter of Support

Dear Commissioners:

Since the October 4th hearing, at the Commission’s request, the developers of this grocery store project have submitted a revised proposal that adds eight dwelling units on the second floor of the existing building. Russian Hill Neighbors, which represents over 500 households in the neighborhood of the proposed project, has strongly supported a grocery store here since it was first proposed nearly three years ago, and we now strongly support this housing addition. We think this turns what was a good project into a great project.

The sponsor is proposing the addition of one studio, three one-bedroom units, and four two-bedroom units ranging in size from 783 to 1,274 square feet. This appears to be the maximum that can be put into the floor, using essentially all the available windowed frontage. Planning variances are required because the building has no rear yard or open space. These variances are unavoidable given the nature and placement of the building and we support them.

Russian Hill Neighbors has supported this project from the beginning because, based on our own and other surveys, the vast majority of the residents in the area nearest 1600 Jackson Street have said the neighborhood needs a full-service grocery store. No NIMBY organization, **RHN** has consistently supported housing development in our area by policy and action.

The demolition-and-rebuild alternative that some of the opponents advocate is flawed. An almost full-block vacancy would be extended yet another four to five years for new planning and construction, which would be intolerable. A new building could not provide a grocery, as zoning limits a new retail space to no more than 4,000 square feet. And finally, in the current building environment the probable alternative to this project is not a mixed-use apartment building but rather another tenant such as a retail use that does not require Commission approval and that would be unlikely to add as

much life to the street or be as desirable to the neighboring residents as the current proposal. And it is also very unlikely that any housing on the 2nd floor would be offered.

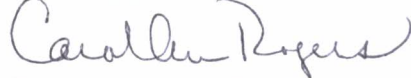
This project will provide a grocery store that the clear majority of residents in the neighborhood have repeatedly said they badly want. It will provide much-needed additional housing that preserves Polk Street's modest-scale and mixed-use environment. It will not require another teardown and will reuse a familiar but long-vacant early 20th century structure.

The problems of brick-and-mortar retail have been much discussed, and we have seen that it has been difficult to get a grocery store to open up in San Francisco lately. This is a project that, if approved, has a good chance of succeeding in a difficult environment.

The developer has complied with the Planning Commission's requests and has the support of the Planning Department. Commissioners, after a nearly three year wait, we ask you again, in the strongest possible way, to please, finally, allow this much needed grocery store and housing project to go forward.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,



Carol Ann Rogers, President

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