

January 9, 2008

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
City Hall  
1300 Perdido St.  
New Orleans, LA 70112

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of The Urban Conservancy and its Board of Directors, I write in support of The Audubon Riverside Neighborhood Association and Smart Growth for Louisiana's appeal to the BZA to overrule the decision of the Department of Safety and Permits that classified "The Pita Pit" as a cafeteria restaurant rather than a fast food restaurant.

We urge the BZA to give due consideration to the appeal; there are compelling economic reasons to do so. While we appreciate the BZA's desire to stimulate economic investment, long-term growth and investor confidence is only possible if a consistent, fair, and transparent zoning process is in place.

The City Planning Commission staff must be given the opportunity to study this controversial project and to make recommendations concerning its suitability. The neighborhood, in turn, deserves the opportunity to have its voices heard.

Furthermore, the City has a vested interest in creating a supportive economic climate that *sustains and grows businesses born and raised locally*. Is a long-term, high-dollar lease held by a high-volume national chain store truly the best financial option to ensure the continued vibrancy and vitality of Magazine Street?

The Urban Conservancy promotes an improved quality of life for all community residents by supporting the right of communities to democratically control their urban environment. We also support diversified local economies that sustain the people who live and work in the community, like the 1150 locally-based business owners currently listed on our web-based directory, [www.staylocal.org](http://www.staylocal.org).

Please consider The Urban Conservancy and our flagship initiative, Stay Local!, a citywide initiative to create a strong economy based on locally-owned businesses, a resource at your disposal. Peruse our Reports & Studies page for information and best practices related to sustainable economic development at [www.staylocal.org/info/](http://www.staylocal.org/info/). If we can provide the BZA with additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Dana Eness, Executive Director  
Stay Local!, The Urban Conservancy

CC: Betsy Stout