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Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
Office of Zoning
441 4th St. NW,
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ZC 12-03R & 12-03Q

Dear Members of the Zoning Commission:

I am a native Washingtonian and I have lived in the District most of my life. I am here today to state my reason for why I believe DCHA should continue to create more diverse and mixed income communities in the Navy Yard Waterfront district.

Most of my life, I have lived in various neighborhoods in Ward 8. The communities were always dominantly black and medium to low income. I felt a lot of stress because the neighborhoods were crime infested. I felt like I couldn't go out and explore the community. I felt that the community had a negative culture of distrust because people had been so brought down by years of being schemed against, being hurt by corrupt building managers, and being alone with no one in the larger community to help them. And, I couldn't help feeling at times that meeting other races outside of my dominantly black community would help me to better understand the world beyond it and offer me a variety of better opportunities. I wanted to personally know people with different backgrounds and cultures. I wanted to break out of the fear barrier and feeling prohibited to explore better life experiences beyond the black community.

In the Fall of 2009, I moved to the Arthur Capper community Senior Building. I moved into an apartment with my mother, who was extremely ill, my sister, and my son. I spent four years helping to take care of my mom. After my mom died in 2013, I moved to a Capitol Quarter rental apartment with my sister and son.

When I lived in the Senior Building, I didn't feel like anything was going on over there. It wasn't motivational. No one provided any encouragement for my family during that difficult time. But, when I moved to Capitol Quarter, everything changed. I've seen an example in my neighbors of what is possible. I feel like I have options. It's a friendly, social, networking community. After my mom's passing, I feel inspired by my neighbors to get back on track and achieve my goals. I want to go back to work. I want to get more education. I want to enhance my life and my son's life. Everything is different now. And, it's because of living with my new neighbors. I know they are a great community and they will encourage and support me. This is something I never experienced as much in my past communities. Living in Capitol Quarter has helped me feel more confident and more capable.

Living in Capitol Quarter – a unit by unit mixed income community – has taught me that no matter what race you are, we are all striving for the same things – good wages, good living, good social networks, and safe communities. Living in a mixed community also teaches us all how to learn about one another, respect one another, get past stereotypes and misjudgments, and break down biases.

I'm here today to oppose the flexibility that DCHA has requested. Granting this flexibility makes it easier for DCHA to build buildings that are not mixed income. Others like me (law-abiding, hard-working people) deserve to live in a truly mixed income community. Living with mixed income neighbors makes all the difference.

Thank you.

Sincerely,


Sylvia Kilpatrick