

Hanousek, Donna (DCOZ)

From: twsdc@verizon.net
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 6:01 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Letter in support of change in zoning for Lanier Heights from R-5-B to R-4

Please forward this email to all members of the DC Zoning Commission

1750 Lanier Place, NW
Washington, DC 20009
January 26, 2016

Zoning Commission Members
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001
Fax No. 202-727-6072

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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RE: Applicant/Case Name : Residents of Lanier Heights & ANC 1C
Case Number : 15-09

Dear Chairman Hood, ViceChairwoman Cohen, Mr. Miller, Mr. Turnbull and Mr. May.

We are residents of the Lanier Heights neighborhood in Adams-Morgan and writing to urge you to support the proposal supported by a large majority of residents of Lanier Heights for a change in zoning from R-5-B to R-4. This proposal will allow Lanier Heights to remain a diverse and vibrant neighborhood, one which is densely developed, yet allows the survival of the beautiful contiguous blocks of single family houses that were built in the early 20th century. The residential character of Lanier Heights is being adversely affected by developers who are purchasing single family houses, adding on additional floors, and extending the front and back facades well beyond their original layout to fill the available lot. These unattractive pop-up developments create small condominium or apartment units that are unsuitable for families; they fail to provide parking for the multiple residents, thus adding more cars to our already overcrowded streets; and block light and the flow of air to the yards of adjoining homes, making the living situation much less desirable for long-time residents.

Lanier Heights already contains a mix of housing types, including large and small apartments, condos, and single family or two unit homes. The neighbors who have worked cooperatively for the change to R-4 development do not oppose sensible increases in density in our neighborhood and the surrounding community. For example, we did not oppose the recent development of the 34-unit Adamo Condo building at the intersection of Lanier Place and Adams Mill Road within our neighborhood (replacing a gas station), or the development of the 80 unit Ontario 17 Condo just outside our neighborhood at the intersection of Columbia Road and 17th Streets (replacing a long-closed movie theatre). We believe density can be appropriately augmented through conversion of commercial properties such as these. However, developers are now targeting the single family homes for development into pop-up residences with 4-8 units. The residents of Lanier Heights are being bombarded by mailings from developers who want to purchase our homes to build more pop-ups. I fear that our neighborhood may soon be ruined by pop-up developments and cause many of the residents of single family homes to move out.

A brief tour of our neighborhood would reveal that while we have several apartment buildings in Lanier Heights, a predominant characteristic of our neighborhood is the long contiguous groups of single family homes, some with basement units, which were built in the early 20th century. It is important to note that this is a primary characteristic of the neighborhood—the proposed area to be rezoned to R-4 doesn't consist of a disconnected set of individual homes. These single family homes that comprise Lanier Heights are the dominant characteristic as you walk through our neighborhood. The façades of these homes are beautiful. Just as important, these homes have large back yards, with the contiguous yards allowing for the flow of air and sunshine that allows for gardening, outdoor eating, and pleasant outdoor living. However, it is important to personally examine the effects of the pop-ups that have already been built in the neighborhood. Fifty-foot high cinderblock walls are built up to the property line and extend back as far as the small garages at the back of the lot. The back yards and back windows of adjacent homes are either plunged into dark shade with no sunlight, or they bake as sunlight heats the windowless cinderblock façade that extends the length of their property line. The large new pop-ups block the flow of air across the back yards of homes along the block.

As our submission for R-4 zoning status indicates, over 60 percent of residents of the single family homes signed a petition supporting the change from R-5-B to R-4 zoning. If you think about it, in neighborhoods where many people don't want to be bothered to take a stand on issues or express their views, over 60% support is an incredible accomplishment and show of support. These residents have attended numerous community meetings over the last two years, including many ANC meetings on the issue to show their support. Less than a dozen opponents of the change in zoning have bothered to express their views at meetings.

The change in zoning that we seek is not out of character with nearby neighborhoods. The city's real estate zoning database groups our neighborhood as "Mount Pleasant" which is immediately to our north. Mount Pleasant, which has a similar neighborhood characteristic, is zoned R-4. Many of the long-time residents who support the change to R-4 zoning raised their families in Lanier Heights and sent their children to the local public schools. They hope that Lanier Heights will continue to have single family homes that allow for families with children who can attend the local schools.

We urge the Zoning Commission to support R-4 zoning for Lanier Heights. A sizeable majority of Lanier Heights residents who live in single family homes have supported this change. Our ANC Commissioners, after holding several community meetings to discuss the issue, **unanimously** supported the change from R-5-B to R-4 zoning. The Zoning Commission should support the will of the Lanier Heights community and support R-4 zoning as well. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas W. Swegle

Kevin M. O'Brien

202-462-5371