

18585

July 5, 2013

Board of Zoning Adjustment
DC Office of Planning
1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650
Washington, DC 20024

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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Re: 446 Emerson St., NW

To the Board of Zoning Adjustment,

Thank you for granting us the hearing to apply for a variance to convert our current single family home with an in-law apartment into a two-unit dwelling. I, Maria Webb Gomes, purchased the home in 2005 - above market price - as a result of a bidding war at the height of the real estate boom when investor-fueled home flips were rampant. I specifically purchased the home with the intent of renting the lower level to my brother, Jason Webb, while I remained in the upper unit, making the mortgage comfortably affordable in that economic climate.

My original investment was \$421,500.

My brother remained a constant tenant from 2005 until 2012, despite perpetual plumbing problems and water damage to the lower level. I married Ronald Gomes in 2007, and together we have spent thousands of dollars patching the various problems that came with this "investor special" home.

We've since invested \$14,000 in multiple, unsuccessful attempts to cure these problems.

Now that my brother has purchased his own home and the lower level is empty, we would like to correctly address the plumbing by excavating the basement and making additional improvements to the overall property. The expense is cost prohibitive without the prospect of again renting the lower level.

Preliminary estimates for the reconstruction are \$155,000; \$40,000 of which is directly related to correctly curing the drainage and persistent under-slab plumbing problems.

Encouraged by the city's long-range goal to rezone our R-3 district to permit accessory units by right, we want to take this opportunity to invest in a high-quality renovation that would attract professionals as tenants. Our intention is to remain in the upper level unit, and rent the lower level.

The plumbing has to be addressed immediately. We want to invest in our home, and not repeat the haphazard, quick-fix approach of the investor that sold me the house. However, we cannot afford to wait the additional years it will take before auxiliary units are a matter of right in our R-3 zone before undertaking this corrective action. For the past year we have lost the rental income from my brother, and have not been able to acquire the building permit to begin excavation. For this reason, we are requesting the appropriate zoning variance to allow us to move forward.

Respectfully,


Maria Webb Gomes and Ronald Gomes

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 18585

EXHIBIT NO. 24

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