

**Board of Zoning Adjustment
Request to Testify as a Party**

Matter: BZA Appeal NO. 18991 (John Stokes/ANC4C)

Hearing Date: September 15, 2015

Pursuant to Section 3106.2 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure, I hereby request to participate as a party in the above appeal relating to the permits issued for a planned apartment building ("Varnum Lofts"), at 1521 Varnum Street, NW. My name is Grace Mills and I live at 1526 Varnum St. NW, which is directly across the street from and within 200 feet of 1521 Varnum Street.

I wish to participate as a proponent of the appeal and request that BZA revoke the permits for Varnum Lofts because it does not conform to the zoning regulations for R4 districts including their intent as described in section 101. The Zoning Administrator erred in not following these provisions and not considering the factors in section 101 when issuing the permits.

My testimony at the hearing on September 15, 2015 will include my concerns on the future impacts of Varnum Lofts on my life and home which is very close to the planned project and may suffer unique, negative impacts including, but not limited, to the following:

- (a) Loss of privacy from the balconies and windows that will abut Varnum Street. The design suggests that the residences in the three above ground units will be able easily look into the front windows of my home.
- (b) A substantial increase in noise impacting my porch and the front of my home. Instead of one family living at 1521 Varnum, there will be four families living in the front of the building. The balconies and windows facing Varnum will allow noise from these residents to travel to my

home. Additionally, there are unenclosed roof-deck balconies from which noise can travel to my home.

- (c) Lights from the Varnum Lofts will have negative impacts on my home. The light may make difficult for me and my family to sleep at night in the rooms facing Varnum Street.
- (d) The planned side-walkway at Varnum Lofts will allow pedestrians to easily cut through the lot to the back service alley and Varnum Street. Given the robberies and burglaries that occur in our neighborhood from time to time, this design may encourage such crimes near my home.
- (e) The height and design of the Varnum Lofts simply does not fit with the other nearby homes. It is out of character with this older, neighborhood of single-family homes built at the turn of the 20th century. Varnum Lofts will have a negative impact on my enjoyment of the architecture and look of my block.
- (f) My family and friends will have a substantially more difficult time finding nearby on-street parking due to the shortage of parking at Varnum Lofts. The plan for only four parking spaces for a seven unit apartment building in which each unit has two bedrooms and a den will increase parking congestion on the block and nearby streets. Parking is already congested because nearby 16th Street NW is off-limits to parking most of the time.
- (g) I live in my home rather than a home on 14th Street or other street that is zoned for apartment buildings because I value living in a single-family row home neighborhood. Varnum Lofts simply does not belong on my block because it is an apartment building. Its presence will likely decrease the values of my home and other nearby homes because many potential home-owners do not want to live near a high density building.

(h) which should be located on 14th Street or Georgia Avenue. Its presence across the street from my home will substantially alter my *LIVING CONDITIONS*

I plan to appear on my own behalf at the hearing if accepted as a party witness.

08-26-2015

August __, 2015

Grace Mills

Grace Mills