

**Testimony of Darren Cambridge, 130 Todd Place NE,
on Zoning Commission Case No. 05-39**

My wife Kara Gotsch and I live directly across the street from the proposed development. Consequently, we're among those most directly affected by the outcome of the zoning decision. There is much about our neighborhood we've learned to love. It's delightful to catch a glimpse of the Washington Monument, to feel removed from the roar of the city, to always have a street parking space available right in front of our house, and to be able to get to know the names of most everyone on our block. It would be nice if none of these things were to change, and some of them probably will if the development is approved.

However, we also recognize that we're the face of change. We're young, white, and relatively well-paid. Prior to moving here we ~~lived in neighborhoods~~ we lived in Columbia Heights, Mount Pleasant, and Dupont Circle. There are certainly ways we'd like to see Eckington change that would make it more like those neighborhoods. We'd love a more vibrant street life, with more varied retail, sit-down dining and live entertainment options within walking distance.

But there are also changes we witnessed there we'd never wish upon our new home. Over the last four years, we saw many of our working class neighbors, most of them Latino and African American, forced to leave as rents rose out of reach and landlords rushed to covert affordable housing into lucrative market rate condos. People who had invested much of their lives in the community no longer have a place. Eckington is in danger of suffering the same fate if the work of organizations like St. Martin's and Catholic Charities isn't supported.

Although I work in the suburbs, I choose to live in the city because I value its diversity. My wife and I want to live in a community where those of all incomes and ethnicities are welcomed. We want the waitress who serves us breakfast at the Waffle Shop, the day care worker who may someday educate our children, and the guy who changes the oil in the taxi we'll be taking home tonight to be able to live on our block. We reject without qualification the implicit contention that people without a lot of money make lesser neighbors.

We believe those residents who lived through the tough years ought to enjoy the benefits of the change of which we are a part. The St. Martin's Apartment project is part of the solution. There's nothing in the design itself that poses a threat to the improvement for which many of its opponents are doing passionate and essential work. However, joining preservation and improvement will only be successful if it's part of a comprehensive plan.

As a member of the Washington Interfaith Network, St. Martin's is committed and accountable to a citywide agenda of neighborhood reinvestment. Many WIN members have joined us here today to support them. Eckington is one of twelve neighborhoods WIN convinced the city council to target for reinvestment. I hope that the other organizations represented here today will join with St. Martin's and WIN to develop a balanced plan for Eckington's growth, with the St. Martin's Apartments as a centerpiece. I look forward to seeing them each morning when I awake for years to come as a testament to that effort's success.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 05-39

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
EXHIBIT NO. 9

CASE NO.05-39
EXHIBIT NO.49