

August 31, 2002

Alberto P. Bastida
Secretary of the Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning, Suite 210
441 4th St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Bastida and Members of the Zoning Commission:

This letter is in reference to Case No. 02-19 (Text Amendment – Forest Hills Tree and Slope Overlay District). We are strongly in support of the overlay as it has been amended and recommend that the Zoning Commission approve it as amended.

The trees are the overwhelmingly important characteristic of the Forest Hills neighborhood. They were preserved by those who built this neighborhood. Most of the larger trees are more than 100 years old and pre-date development of this neighborhood. We see it as our responsibility to preserve this legacy for those who will come to live in this wonderful section of the city.

We have been alarmed in recent years by the pattern of homes on roomy lots being torn down and replaced by virtual lot-line-to-lot-line structures that crowd in on neighboring buildings and create a vista not in keeping with the historic lot occupancy patterns of Forest Hills. In some cases, this has been done not only across the front of the lot but extending into the rear of the deeper lots.

Forest Hills is a unique neighborhood in one respect – We probably have some of the most diverse housing distributions in the city. There are large, expensive and magnificent homes on large, tree filled lots. There are also smaller lots with modest homes that serve as starter homes for many families. This diversity is a strength of Forest Hills. We have young families with infants and young children. We have families with junior high and high school age children. We have moms and dads with kids in college and we have moms and dads with their kids coming back to their home with their kids. And we have retired and older scions of our community who simply want to live with us as long as they are able.

If the overlay is not adopted, this character will change. The smaller lots will fall to developers who will build homes that new families cannot afford. Our neighborhood will lose its diverse character. Not only will the trees either be removed or die under the economic pressure to "build the big McMansion," but the vitality of this infant to retiree diversity will disappear. Only those who can afford to "buy the McMansions" will live in Forest Hills. We, who have been here and have thrived on this diversity, do not wish to allow this legacy to be lost. We strongly urge the Commission to approve the overlay.

Thank you for considering this opinion and thank you and the Commission for your service to the people of the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

James Hambrecher
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WDC 20008

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-19
EXHIBIT NO. 213
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