



Forest Hills Neighbors for Responsible Preservation

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BY

BY HAND DELIVERY

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Room 210
441 Fourth Street NW
Washington DC 20001

7 October 2002

**Re: Forest Hills Protective Tree and Slope Overlay
Case Number ZC 02-19**

Dear Commissioners:

During the meeting on September 30, Commissioner Parsons asked what would happen if the Zoning Commission were to return the Tree and Slope matter to the neighborhood for further work. Would the matter just die, as has apparently happened in other such cases?

Forest Hills Neighbors for Responsible Preservation (FHNRP) welcomes the opportunity to join neighbors and other interested parties in a constructive endeavor to develop a new proposal to meet the present and future zoning needs of the community.

What have we learned from the process to date?

The events of the last six months have demonstrated without shadow of a doubt, that our community has many serious and talented individuals who are committed to safeguarding our neighborhood. We have also learned that our community is incredibly diverse, both in terms of homes and lots, and in terms of concerns and visions for the future. Finally, and most important, we have affirmed the need for openness and transparency, understanding that widespread participation and opportunity to listen are the key to success in achieving consensus.

What do we want to achieve?

- A well thought through and widely accepted overlay proposal
- A reduced level of tension in the Forest Hills community
- A process that can be replicated elsewhere in the District if the Zoning Commission finds that useful
- Experienced individuals who could be called upon by the Zoning Commission to help in other parts of the District

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia¹
Case 02-19
Exhibit 276

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-19
EXHIBIT NO.276

How should this effort be organized?

We have suggested that the following principles guide the process:

1. Respect the diversity of Forest Hills development and the rights of property owners;
2. Ensure that the process is open to acknowledged experts and that problems are clearly defined so that solutions can be evaluated objectively;

The present atmosphere requires special sensitivity to the positions taken in the debates of the last six months. We pledge ourselves to a democratic, grassroots approach. To begin, we ask that the overlay be removed from having any effect while community discussions are occurring. Second, we suggest that members of the community participate as individuals, rather than as designated representatives of specific groups. We expect that participants would include members of FHNRP, FHCA, ANC 3F, and the Office of Planning, as well as other interested individuals who are unaffiliated with any of these groups. The principal role of the Office of Planning would be to bring expertise and access to expertise to the table.

We would see a series of scheduled community meetings, each with a well publicized agenda, to seek consensus on a progressively detailed set of issues. We will stay with each issue until we have reached consensus, whatever it takes. Everyone will be heard, divergent views will be respected, and we will not rush to judgment. Once consensus has been reached, we will distribute a draft report to the entire neighborhood, solicit written comments from the neighborhood on the draft report, and summarize them for consideration at a public meeting. Those actually attending the public meetings will have an opportunity to shape the community consensus, and this process will make it possible for all views to be heard.

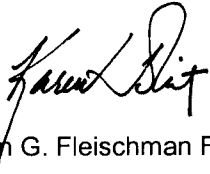
The Stages of the Process

The process will be designed to achieve wide agreement at each stage, to build a solid framework of fact, perspective, and trust before building on these results in seeking further progress.

1. Define goals and objectives
2. Seek expert opinion on each key issue
 - Independent experts
 - Office of Planning
 - Experts within the Community
3. Prepare draft reports at each stage
 - Goals and objectives
 - Alternative approaches to reach these goals and objectives
 - Expert analysis of key issues
 - Tentative set of conclusions and approaches
 - Draft overlay proposal
 - Second draft overlay proposal
4. Prepare final proposal for submission to the Zoning Commission

At each stage of this process, and especially when a reasonably mature draft has been prepared, we suggest that we seek some form of written endorsement by the community. The intent is to seek a stable and recorded consensus at each stage, before building on it in the next stage. If we are successful with this approach, the Zoning Commission will receive a proposed Overlay petition and a report with wide support from the community, which explains the rationale for the petition and also identifies dissenting viewpoints. It will be your choice to adopt it or not, but you will not face another tendentious proceeding of the sort just completed.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen G. Fleischman Foreit, on behalf of

**FOREST HILLS NEIGHBORS FOR
RESPONSIBLE PRESERVATION**

Mark and Laura Baughman
E. Andre Carter and Leslie A. Ross
Robert and Dorothy Coll
James and Karen Foreit
Jane Halpern and Warren R. Watts
William and Cindy Kelly
Carole M. Maudlin and Robert V. Maudlin
James P. Riley
Andrew Stevenson
Leonard and Helen Zax
Frederick Fisher, on behalf of Hillwood Museum

Cc: Office of Planning
ANC 3F
Kathy Patterson
Forest Hills Citizens Association
Forest Hills Neighborhood Alliance