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Alberto P. Bastida, AICP
Secretary of the Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington D.C., 20001

June 12, 2002

02-19

D.C. DEPT. OF ZONING
JUN 14 AM 9:07

Dear Mr. Bastida and Members of the Zoning Commission:

I am a Forest Hills resident and I live within the area affected by the proposed tree and slope overlay for our neighborhood. ***I have strong objections about this proposal and about the way it was developed.***

Taking steps to protect trees in our neighborhood seems reasonable. However, as drafted, the proposal imposes restrictions against new homes that are not only unreasonable, but are more restrictive than most homes in our neighborhood now meet. So, instead of attempting to ensure that new homes are in keeping with the character of our neighborhood, they are attempting to require that new homes meet a *higher* standard. Moreover, in response to concerns that such restrictions might actually affect existing homeowners, the language was revised to exempt existing homes from these new restrictive standards. ***Supporters of this proposal are promoting new zoning restrictions that they themselves are not willing to meet.***

Beyond the obvious double standard, the long-term effects of this proposal will be adverse. Forest Hills is an eclectic neighborhood, with some grand older homes on large lots, many lovely homes on medium lots, and a number of modest, even eccentric, homes on medium and small lots. Some large proportion of lots in Forest Hills are smaller than the 12,000 square feet threshold in the proposed restrictions, and certainly do not have proposed the 16-foot side yards. Therefore, when it comes time for many of the neighborhood's homes to be rebuilt, this proposal will seriously impede practical, reasonable rebuilding plans. And yet, if we want to maintain an attractive neighborhood with solid property values, we should not discourage options for replacing modest homes in deteriorating condition.

This proposal is a thinly-veiled attempt to prevent the building of new homes like many, if not most, of those already in the neighborhood. ***We should all be wary of allowing a few vocal residents pass off such exclusionary and powerful restrictions in the guise of tree preservation.*** Forest Hills is an attractive, park-like urban neighborhood. It can remain so, while still allowing residents and potential residents to make the best use of available land. I strongly urge the Zoning Commission to send this proposal back to the drawing board until it is what it says it is – a proposal to preserve our trees.

Sincerely,


Susan Krause Bell

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-19
Exhibit 57

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-19
EXHIBIT NO.57