

Tania B. Jackson
Director of Community Policy, the Jair Lynch Companies
Testimony in Support of Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning
Thursday, July 28, 2005

My name is Tania Jackson and I am the director of community policy at The Jair Lynch Companies, a developer based here in Washington, DC. Although our company is actively involved with the DC Building Industry Association (DCBIA) (Mr. Lynch is on their board) and the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development (CNHED) (I am on their board), we have found ourselves at odds with both organizations over the issue of inclusionary zoning. Our company is seven years old and located in the historic U Street Corridor, I am a lifelong resident and seventh-generation Washingtonian, who lives in the Columbia Heights Neighborhood. Both areas, Columbia Heights and U Street, are experiencing a development boom that exemplifies the current enthusiasm for building in this city.

JLC has concluded, after several months of discussion and debate internally, and several meetings with both organizations, that we favor the adoption of a Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning policy for the District of Columbia. As a developer working across a broad spectrum of affordability in housing development, we have had to use a lot of different tools to get to the varying levels of affordability that we have provided in our projects. We very much feel that a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy would serve as a great tool, to be used in conjunction with many others, for creating the vibrant mixed-income communities that should be our collective goal in Washington, DC. We feel that a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy will help meet one of our development goals—figuring out how to produce more affordable housing, in order to meet the still growing need for such in this city.

JLC does not view a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy as a panacea to cure the current housing crunch, rather, we see it as a great way to provide housing opportunity for the particular income levels at which it is aimed. MIZ should be used in conjunction with resources like the Housing Production Trust Fund, federal subsidy, HOPE VI and tenant purchase to create neighborhoods that have people at all income levels.

Further, the needs of individual neighborhoods must be weighed carefully as affordable housing policy is crafted. If the aim is to create mixed income communities, which is our focus at JLC, then neighborhoods have to be weighed on a case by case basis as off-site development options are considered as part of the overall IZ policy. We would like to see a policy adopted that would clearly manage the ways in which off-site development occurs in the neighborhood in which it is proposed—understanding that the opportunities in some neighborhoods are limited and would need further assistance to happen or require creative partnership. We feel that the campaign's proposal begins to get at this issue, and would like to see further clarification about the management of such instances, and a transparent decision making process for allowing such exceptions—a process that clearly takes into consideration the needs and opportunities within each neighborhood. We would also like to see in-lieu-of fees clearly earmarked for affordable housing development, and managed with the same consideration about individual neighborhood needs, and a willingness on the part of the city to come up with creative solutions to get to the end goal of the MIZ program—mixed income neighborhoods.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 04-33
EXHIBIT NO. 95
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