

Monday, July 25, 2005

ZONING COMMISSION HEARING

My name is Jenefer Ellington, I am a member of the Affordable Housing Alliance and I speak on behalf of the Statehood Green Party.

DC has an affordable housing crisis Crises are characterized by being sudden, unexpected and short term
This crisis is not sudden, unexpected or short term

We have been in crisis mode for 4-5 yrs. We saw it coming, recognized the tsunami of gentrification .. and at this late date, we are taking small steps to ~~remedy~~^{stop} the harm done to less than wealthy residents.

Our city government blindly embraced economic development fueled by market forces. They regarded the displaced lives in its wake as collateral damage. They ignored the social contract - gov't's obligation to secure a level playing field for all its citizens - instead our gov't gave its allegiance to trickle down economics. There was no trickle down. Property prices and property taxes went up, but incomes did not

Until this year, the city gov't stood by and, in some instances, wrung its hands, but mostly ignored the disastrous reality. Naturally, they cheered the added revenue that came with the raised housing and property prices. Never mind their obligation to spend the added revenue for public prosperity and public needs

Consequently, citizen coalitions formed to fight for affordable housing and some elected officials came on board. With the election of 2004, new council members joined the defenders of the public interest and together we made measurable advances in the housing sphere
Of course, that does nothing for the 1,000s who have been forced to sell or leave their homes.

This year, finally, enforcement and strengthening of laws already on the books has slowed the tide of displacement and reaffirmed that middle and low income residents can afford to live here.

And that brings us to the issue on the table today. Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning It is one of the tools designed to enable middle income citizens to live in DC The City Council has declared its support for MIZ and the Campaign for MIZ ~~has~~ proffered in detail to the Zoning Commission, the explanation and arguments that make MIZ necessary and desirable. Many of those arguments will be presented in testimony today
What argument against MIZ weighs heavily enough in the balance to override its merits?

The housing crisis is nation wide DC is not breaking new ground. we are in the wake of many other cities who installed MIZ some years ago Now, it falls to our Zoning Commission to vote in favor of opening the housing market to middle and lower income residents.

Jenefer Ellington
641 Maryland Ave. NE , Wash DC 20002 (546-0940)

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-33
EXHIBIT NO. 53

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.04-33
EXHIBIT NO.53