

TESTIMONY OF  
YAVOCKA D YOUNG  
BEFORE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOARD OF ZONING  
OCTOBER 5, 2006  
OPPOSITION TO  
BLANKET INCLUSIONARY ZONING POLICY

GOOD EVENING ZONING COMMISSIONERS, CITY OFFICIALS, AND COLLEAGUES I AM YAVOCKA YOUNG OF 1673 W ST SE IN WARD 8, AND I AM HERE TO STATE MY OPPOSITION TO A BLANKET INCLUSIONARY ZONING POLICY. SPECIFICALLY, I BELIEVE WARD 8, AND REALLY BOTH WARDS EAST OF THE ANACOSTIA RIVER SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THIS POLICY

IF THE GOAL OF INCLUSIONARY ZONING IS TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE CITY, THEN THE WARDS EAST OF THE RIVER, WHICH HAVE MORE THAN MET THEIR QUOTA FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS SHOULD BE EXEMPT.

THERE ARE GENERATIONS IN THESE WARDS WHO HAVEN'T PAID A MARKET RATE RENT IN DECADES. AND I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT A CITY-WIDE MARKET RATE, I AM TALKING ABOUT AN EAST-OF-THE-RIVER MARKET RATE--WHICH IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. THIS IS SOMETHING COUNCILMEMBER JIM GRAHAM AND OTHERS WHO PUSHED FOR CITY-

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
01-3121  
CASE NO. 04-33A  
EXHIBIT NO. 39

WIDE RENT CONTROL DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND WHILE THE AVERAGE RENT CITY-WIDE MAY BE APPROACHING \$2,000, THE AVERAGE MARKET RATE RENT IN WARD 8 ISN'T EVEN APPROACHING \$1,000. THANKS TO DC'S RENT CONTROL LAWS WARD 8 WILL BE STUCK WITH THIS LOW AND NO INCOME RENTAL MARKET PERPETUALLY.

IN FACT, THE HIGHEST RENTS CHARGED IN WARD 8 ARE CHARGED TO THE DC HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT THE TAX DOLLARS OF HARD WORKING CITIZENS IS GOING TO PAY FOR ABOVE MARKET RENTS IN WARD 8 AS SECTION 8 LANDLORDS ARE GETTING RENT PAYMENTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT THEY CAN'T GET FROM THE MARKET THIS IS BECAUSE THEY CAN CHARGE THE GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE CITY'S AVERAGE RENTS

MEANWHILE THE MARKET RATE IN THE WARD HOVERS AROUND \$700 ON THE HIGH END FOR A DECENT 2-BEDROOM APARTMENT. THAT MEANS FAMILIES WITH JUST 50 PERCENT OF THE MEDIAN INCOME CAN AFFORD TO LIVE IN WARD 8. KEY WORD BEING "INCOME."

AT THE SAME TIME, THE EAST OF THE RIVER NEIGHBORHOODS ARE AMONG THE CITY'S LEADERS IN NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION. IF THESE WARDS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS LAW--WHICH TARGETS NEW CONSTRUCTION, NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOUSING FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER MIDDLE INCOME PERSONS WILL BE COMPROMISED WARD 8 NEEDS THIS INCOME CATEGORY TO BE A REVENUE GENERATING WARD AND TO

ATTRACT THE KIND OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT THAT STABILIZES COMMUNITIES. RIGHT NOW THE AVERAGE WARD 8 RESIDENT COSTS THE CITY \$12,000 AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT \$9,000 ANNUALLY IN SUBSIDIES AND SERVICES AND CONTRIBUTES ONLY ABOUT \$500 TO THE TAX BASE.

I AM ASKING YOU TO EXCLUDE WARD 8 FROM INCLUSIONARY ZONING.

INCLUSIONARY ZONING IN WARD 8 WOULD BE AN EXCESSIVE MEASURE. (ACCORDING TO NEIGHBORHOOD INFO DC) THE WARD CURRENTLY HAS MOST OF THE CITY'S SUBSIDIZED UNITS AND THE AVERAGE HOME PRICE IN WARD 8 IN 2005 WAS JUST \$198,000 THAT'S COMPARED TO \$850,000 AND \$868,000 IN WARDS 2 AND 3. IN MOST CASES, WARD 7'S NUMBERS ARE ONLY SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN WARD 8'S WE HAVE ENTERPRISE ZONES, HOPE IV, V, AND VI, HOUSING COUNSELING AGENCIES, TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, AND MORE THAN ENOUGH NON-PROFITS TO SUPPORT THEM ALL. ANYBODY WHO SAYS THE EAST OF THE RIVER COMMUNITIES NEED MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS NOT ANALYZING THE NUMBERS.

WHAT "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" ADVOCATES OUTSIDE OF THESE NEIGHBORHOODS REALLY MEAN WHEN THEY ARE PUSHING FOR MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THESE WARDS IS "PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT DC'S POOR STAY OVER THERE WHERE WE PUT THEM 40 YEARS AGO UNDER THE GUISE OF URBAN RENEWAL." WHAT OTHERWISE

REASONABLE PEOPLE INSIDE THESE COMMUNITIES MEAN WHEN THEY ARE PUSHING FOR MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THESE WARDS IS "PLEASE DON'T TAKE OUR HOMES AWAY LIKE YOU DID 40 YEARS AGO UNDER THE GUISE OF URBAN RENEWAL "

THE DC AREA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 2.9% IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, THE LOWEST AMONG MAJOR CITIES AND WELL BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE OF 4.6%. THERE ARE JOBS HERE--AND CERTAINLY JOBS THAT CAN GET A FAMILY TO 50% OF THE MEDIAN INCOME. HOW IS IT THEN THAT WARD 8 HAS SUCH A HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (14.3% IN 2004) AND BOTH WARDS TOGETHER HOUSE 3/4 OF THE CITY'S UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (A 2005 STUDY BY WIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN)?

I CAN TELL YOU THAT IT HAS A LOT TO DO WITH THE LACK OF A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION, EARLY SINGLE PARENTHOOD, AND THE LACK OF A WORK ETHIC. WARD 8'S PROBLEM IS UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT, NOT A LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING. THERE IS A FULL-ON GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY CULTURE IN WARD 8 AND AS A RESIDENT, FORMER 2-TERM ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONER, AND NOW A COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION AGENT IN THE WARD, I AM ASKING YOU NOT TO ADD TO IT.

AS A MATTER OF FACT WE WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE TO BE HERE IF MORE OF THE MODERATE INCOME PERSONS YOUR LEGISLATION TARGETS WOULD CONSIDER DC COMMUNITIES THEY COULD EASILY AFFORD TO

LIVE IN. WE COULD LET THE MARKET FORCES CREATE NEW ECONOMIES OF SCALE IN THE CITY'S MORE AFFORDABLE NEIGHBORHOODS. BUT I GUESS THAT'S TOO HARD A SELL FOR EVEN DC'S LOUDEST AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVOCATES.

EVEN THE WEB SITE OF ONE OF THIS COUNTRY'S MOST BELOVED LIBERALS, SENATOR JOHN KERRY, ADVISES THOSE SEEKING HOUSING IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TO AVOID NEIGHBORHOODS IN NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST BEYOND 11TH STREET

YOU SEE, WARD 8 ISN'T REALLY MEANT TO BE ONE OF DC'S INCLUSIONARY ZONES AFTER ALL.

THANK YOU