

Z.C. Case No. 04-33A

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MY
NEIGHBORHOOD AND IN ALL NEIGHBORHOODS IN DC.

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2007 OCT 19 PM 1:46

To the Members of the Zoning Commission

I live in DC but, unfortunately, will be away until October 26th. Therefore, I am submitting my testimony in writing. I conceived of, and principally authored, the inclusionary zoning (Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Legislation) in Montgomery County, MD which became law in 1973. It has proven effective and notable for its application across all zones.

Therefore, it is my opinion that there need not be a map – inclusionary zoning should apply throughout DC. If, however, you feel it necessary to have a map, the D.C. Office of Planning's proposed map appears to be equitably applied across the city.

Further, affordable housing and historic preservation are totally compatible. That is why tax credits are provided to make historic preservation combined with affordable housing economically feasible. The national Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), in their policy statement of Jan.11, 2001 on Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation, ask that local governments:

“actively seek ways to reconcile national historic preservation goals with the special economic and social needs associated with affordable housing, given that this is now one of the Nation's most pressing challenges.”

Examples of mixing historic preservation with affordable house abound nationally, as well as in D.C. There is affordable housing tucked into historic portions of most D.C. neighborhoods, including Capitol Hill

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Cleveland Park and Chevy Chase. I am sure that each of you can add neighborhoods to this list.

One of the earliest mixed developments in the country is Charleston, South Carolina, where the housing authority in the 1980s created infill housing with "piazzas" (high-ceilinged porches historically designed to capture sea breezes) and other features to fit the character of neighborhoods that are part of the oldest designated historic district in the country.

By 1999, over 39,000 low and moderate-income units had received the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the number of such projects is rising. This increase reflects a growing view of affordable housing development as a part of the larger goal of community revitalization and the acceptability of affordable housing as a part of historic neighborhoods.¹ Additionally, many affordable housing units are integrated into historic neighborhoods without the use of tax credits.

I respectfully urge you to quickly approve the plan, adding more neighborhoods rather than removing any. Adding the tool of inclusionary zoning to the effort to increase affordable housing in D.C. is long overdue!

If I can be of any further service, do not hesitate to contact me.

¹ Karen Ceraso "Eyesore to Community Asset: Historic Preservation Creates Affordable Housing and Livable Neighborhoods" Shelterforce July/August 1999.