

Testimony Before the D.C. Zoning Commission Regarding Support for Zoning Case No. 04-33G
– Making IZ affordable
By Steven Cook
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April 14, 2016

Good evening.
My name is Steven Cook.

I am a Ward 5 resident and a member of National City Christian Church at 5 Thomas Circle, NW. I also am active in the Washington Interfaith Network.

We at National City are committed to preserving and expanding affordable housing opportunities in the District as part of our ministry and are working with WIN and other churches in our neighborhood to identify opportunities to do this in our neighborhood.

Today, I am speaking on my own behalf. I support Zoning Case No. 04-33G. Please make Inclusionary Zoning more affordable.

I ask the Zoning Commission require all rental IZ units to be affordable to those at 60 percent of median family income. This would make inclusionary zoning effective at last in creating housing that is within reach of lower-income residents. Currently, IZ units are too expensive and aren't serving the people who can benefit from it most.

The strength of the District's housing market and the extra density that is allowed as part of IZ makes an increase in affordable housing possible through the private housing market.

Features of the current program that should be preserved include the requirement that IZ units remain affordable, so that lower-income individuals and families can remain a part of the D.C. fabric into the next century.

Although it was implemented as the housing bubble burst and new construction came to a halt, inclusionary zoning is beginning to show results. As the housing market has revived, inclusionary zoning ensures that new affordable units will continue to become available. Now, 1200 affordable units are in the pipeline.

At the current 80 percent AMI threshold, inclusionary zoning has not created the housing opportunities that it was intended to do. Nevertheless, a rental building nearing completion at 5333 Connecticut Ave, N.W. will have 19 IZ units, 10 of them affordable to households with incomes at 50 percent of area median income.

Inclusionary zoning is a valuable tool in maintaining the level of affordable housing. It ensures that affordable housing will continue to be supplied and, equally important, maintained.

Zoning Case No. 04-33G will ensure that many more people realize the benefits of inclusionary zoning.

Thank you.

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