

April 14, 2016

Chairman Anthony Hood
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Support for Zoning Case No. 04-33G: Make Inclusionary Zoning more affordable

Good evening and thank you Chairman Hood and members of the Zoning Commission for the opportunity to testify tonight. My name is Sarah Novick and I am a community organizer with Jews United for Justice, also known as JUFJ, a DC-based grassroots organization that represents thousands of people in the local Jewish community who are working to improve life for all of our city's residents. I am here tonight to advocate for the Office of Planning's Option 1B; to urge you to make Inclusionary Zoning truly inclusionary by ensuring that IZ-created units are accessible to people on the lower end of the income spectrum who are currently priced out of the IZ market.

Jewish tradition teaches that each person is made *b'tzelem Elohim*—made in the image of God. Every human being has value and worth and should be treated with loving-kindness, respect, and dignity. If we were truly to treat one another as though we were made in God's image, we in this city would not allow thousands of families to live on mile-long waitlists for housing they can afford. As Jews, we at JUFJ believe that housing is a human right. Each person deserves a safe, stable, and secure home; a home that provides the foundation for each of us to live full and dignified lives.

JUFJ is proud to be part of the coalition that won the original Inclusionary Zoning program and we commend the Zoning Commission for its implementation of this affordable housing policy best practice. With a few minor changes to the IZ program, more truly affordable homes can be developed without harming housing production. Now that the program has been implemented for several years, and we see DC's affordable housing crisis continue to worsen, we urge the Zoning Commission to make all IZ rental units affordable to people earning no more than 60% of the MFI, or about \$52,000 for a two-person household.

As you know, the large majority – 77% – of the rental IZ units that exist are only affordable to people with an income at 80% MFI, or about \$70,000 for a two-person household. Based on what many of you said at the March 3rd hearing, you know there is a clear market for units for people who earn incomes at the 60% level. Those District residents have been knocking on your doors, asking for access to IZ units for a long time. Now is the time to revisit the policy before IZ produces more apartments that aren't actually affordable to the highest demand and need of people in the market.

As you think about this change in the IZ program it may be easy to get caught up in the dollars and cents. We urge you to instead consider the individual people and families who live in the District who need homes, who need access to Inclusionary Zoning apartments, and the many others like us who want to see our neighbors have equal opportunities to thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO. 203
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