

Leach, Deonte (DCOZ)

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To: bnadeau@dccouncil.us; Evans, Jack (COUNCIL); Evans, Jack (COUNCIL); Cheh, Mary (COUNCIL); Todd, Brandon (COUNCIL); kmcduffie@dccouncil.us; Allen, Charles (COUNCIL); Alexander, Yvette (COUNCIL); lmay@dccouncil.us; vorange@dccouncil.us; abonds@dccouncil.us; dgrosso@dccouncil.us; esilverman@dccouncil.us; Mendelson, Phil (COUNCIL); DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ); Racine, Karl (OAG)
Cc: tfazzini@dccouncil.us; Grant, Schannette (COUNCIL); Werner, Ruth (COUNCIL); Willingham, Jonathan (COUNCIL); sneman@dccouncil.us; jmobley@dccouncil.us; rgulstone@dccouncil.us; lmarks@dccouncil.us; Lowery, Terese (Council); adavis@dccouncil.us; jbrown@dccouncil.us; dmeadows@dccouncil.us; ikang@dccouncil.us; dcalhoun@dccouncil.us; srosenamy@dccouncil.us; Moore, Brian (COUNCIL); clefevre@dccouncil.us; Bardin, Sara (DCOZ); Schellin, Sharon (DCOZ); Bergstein, Alan (OAG); Rushkoff, Bennett (OAG); Pittman, James (OAG)
Subject: Fix IZ right, ZC Case 04-33G

Dear DC Planning Officials,

I believe that the IZ program has been broken for way too long. IZ was founded on good intentions but due to inaccurate definitions actually exacerbates the housing crisis in DC.

That is, right now developers get to build bigger buildings because they provide a pittance of 'affordable' IZ units (8 out of 100 units for example). If I am understanding this correctly, then I see IZ is a farce.

Further, according to the zoning code now, developers can expect to market their 'affordable' studios at \$1500 a month to fulfill their IZ requirements. Hmmm... really? Who is this affordable to (those making \$60,000 a year).

So when you have \$1500 a month set as the most 'affordable' rents in any new building (with more than 10 units), that means the rest of the building has 'market-rate' units renting at more than \$1500+ a month. I hope city officials see now why, in part, DC has no more truly affordable rental units, say at \$500 or \$800 a month.

<http://wtop.com/dc/2015/03/study-finds-affordable-private-housing-in-d-c-all-but-gone/>

On top of all this, IZ does not currently require developers to build any 'affordable' units for families.

Why are developers getting bonus density for constructing buildings that don't ensure we have a diverse array of apartment sizes to serve DC's working families? This is unacceptable.

IZ rules must be fixed and in the right way!

* The definition of an affordable IZ unit should at most be 50% AMI, with 30% AMI a much better metric of 'affordability'. The current definition of an IZ unit set at 80% AMI is a joke, and so is 70% or even 60%.

* IZ production requirements which live up to the housing crisis in DC must be implemented now. Current IZ production expectations must be doubled at least with 20% to 30% of any new building in the District to include IZ units so we can meaningfully contend with the number one priority in the DC Comprehensive Plan -- preserving and producing more affordable housing in the city.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
ZONING COMMISSION
CASE NO. 04-33G
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EXHIBIT NO. 37

* No additional bonus density -- Developers know that DC is one of the hottest rental and condo markets in the nation. Marketing IZ units as affordable in any new building is a way for the development community to give back for DC's windfall real estate market -- a market with such rising housing costs and rents that tens of thousands of longtime District residents have been forced from their homes in the past decade. If additional bonus density is considered, it must only be given to developers who are willing to market IZ units to families requiring 3 or more bedrooms with eligibility for those with incomes at 30% AMI or less.

* There should be no exemptions from IZ in any district/zone in the City -- immediately. As it exists, exemptions to IZ is exclusive planning which stands in complete opposition to the DC Comprehensive Plan. This is our chance to fix this terrible mistake.

I look forward to action on this. Please keep me informed.

Respectfully,
Gloria Twesigye
gloriyus@gmail.com

Ward: 5
Zip: 20002