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Testimony of
Federation of Citizens Association
Of the District of Columbia

Before the Zoning Commission
June 16, 2005

Case No 04-34

My name is George Clark and I am pleased to testify here before you tonight on behalf of the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District of Columbia and its over 45 member organizations As you know, the Federation is intensely interested in zoning and land use issues in the District. And we believe that open space, trees and effective control of stormwater runoff are important issues. For that reason we support the May 12, 2005 proposal of the Zoning Advisory Committee to eliminate all zoning restrictions on the selection of paving materials for open parking spaces and parking lots.

We agree that it is time that DC join more vigorously the movement towards green and low impact development. As the Nation's Capital and as the City of Trees, we believe that DC should be a leader in this growing movement We are happy to endorse the paving change, and view it as the first in what should be many changes to encourage such techniques. The benefits for stormwater management and tree preservation and planting are well documented Many architects and landscape architects want to use these techniques and are

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frustrated by their inability to do so under the current zoning regulations. Eliminating theses restrictions will enable homeowners to sue pervious surfaces to save trees and increase green space

Surrounding jurisdictions like Montgomery County do not have paving requirements in the zoning code, leaving it to the owners and builders to make sure that the techniques used work for the site and surrounding properties And we expect that the DC Building Code and the Department of Health will make sure that any necessary, minimal standards are met.

We also think that the if a regulation is kept on the books as the Office of Planning proposes, that it should say "pervious or impervious," lest readers and users think that impervious is still intended, even though unstated

We also support the ZAC's proposal to revise the proposed changes to the Planned Unit Development Evaluation Standards on counting stormwater runoff controls as "environmental amenities " Under that proposal, the Department of Health must certify that the applicant proposes runoff controls significantly in excess of those that the regulations would require anyway, and that unless DOH is able to state the difference, no amenity preference may be granted. While we strongly believe that PUD applicants should be steered towards environmental amenities, we see no reason to grant them for merely complying with the law or claiming a benefit that they cannot prove will take place The ZAC proposal would implement those goals

I will be happy to take any questions