

Comments on ZRR Case No. 08-06A – Proposed Title 11 DCMR – Zoning

The Shepherd Park Citizens Association is pleased to comment on the proposed zoning regulation changes prepared by the DC Office of Planning. We share with you a desire to enhance the quality of life for all residents of the District of Columbia. We believe that these new regulations, if they are modified with concerned citizen input and properly and faithfully implemented, can help achieve the worthy goal of a vibrant, pleasant city open to the future while protecting its treasured history.

The proposed zoning regulations are a comprehensive document; we do not intend to comment on all its particulars. Rather, we limit our remarks to those changes with an immediate impact on our beloved neighborhood.

First of all, we applaud the maintenance of the majority of zoning in Shepherd Park as R-2 (formerly R-1B). We believe that this designation is entirely appropriate for our area and should help maintain its unique character. However, we are concerned about keeping the current zoning (R-2 now R-3) for 12th Street NW between Hemlock and Fern Streets. This area is developed with single-family, detached houses on moderate sized lots like the rest of Shepherd Park. We know of no plans nor desire to construct “semi-detached” dwellings there and, in fact, none have been constructed there in over 50 years. Therefore, we request that this area be designated as R-2 like the rest of Shepherd Park.

Additionally, we are concerned about the sheer number of uses that could possibly fall under the guise of “Home Occupations and Businesses”. This is, in our view, overly broad and could lead to increased acrimony among and between neighbors as well as disturb neighborhood cohesion. Therefore, we request that Home Occupation Permits (HOP) be issued with and after a public hearing for the following uses: daytime care, lodging, tutoring and home sales. We understand the “lodging” category deals with traditional, long-term “roomers.” However, with the advent of the “sharing” economy, we believe that strict procedures need to be developed and enforced to regulate such activities as Airbnb as a business.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Offices of Zoning and Planning and the Zoning Commission in this important undertaking.

Regards,

Mark Pattison

President, Shepherd Park Citizens Association