



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 5B
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Ward 5 Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners
Disparate Treatment with regards to the Zoning Regulations Rewrite (ZRR)

November 16, 2015

Dear Councilmember McDuffie,

I am an active ANC Commissioner in your ward and I seek your help regarding one of the biggest planning policy changes in the District in recent history, the Zoning Regulations Rewrite (ZRR).

In letters and official resolutions, we have reported to the DC Zoning Commission that only a select-few of DC's Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC's) have received additional direct support and information in engaging the massive ZRR.

Some of this additional assistance from the DC Office of Planning came in the form of an ANC-specific zoning comparison matrix, like that received by ANC-1C (see attached).

This matrix takes approximately 20 hours of research using high-resource computer time crawling across large paginated PDF files, and shrinks that to a manageable half-hour of side-by-side review on less than 10 pages. For ANC's with very limited time, you can see how this matrix would enhance engagement on something this important.

Upon examining the public record, Office of Planning staffers (Jennifer Steingasser, Joel Lawson, and Elisa Vitale) have submitted responses stating that their office already has provided all ZRR matrices on their website (see Exhibit #1097 in Zoning Commission Case No. 08-06a).

The fact of the matter is the special ANC-targeted matrix received by only a select-few ANC's are not to our knowledge available on any public website or in print.

I have asked Zoning Commissioners to require the Office of Planning to prepare the same ANC-specific matrix for all ANC's. In addition, we have requested an extension of time to review this information, not yet provided to our ANC, so that my commission 5B, can comment meaningfully and as equally as other ANC's. The Zoning Commission has denied these requests, and I believe unfairly so.

I believe every ANC must receive the especially informative ZRR matrix to make the process easier for all Commissions and affected residents. Put simply, ANC 5B's right to even treatment in the ZRR is being significantly reduced in comparison to how DC's Office of Planning treated other ANC's in other wards. This is especially true when comparing our

treatment to that of the Georgetown-area ANC.

We would like to see a letter be sent to the Zoning Commission by you, as our Councilmember, as well as the Chairman, Phil Mendelson who has oversight of the Office of Planning, so to ensure we receive equal treatment in the ZRR process and to lift this process up to a real level of equal participatory administrative review.

If possible, we seek quick assistance if at all possible as we have been informed the Zoning Commission is meeting next Monday, Nov. 16, for further deliberations on the ZRR.

I look forward to your response.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ursula Higgins'.

Commissioner Ursula Higgins
ANC 5B02