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ATTN: DONNA HANOUSEK

November 6th, 2013

Anthony Hood, Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Zoning Case No. 08-06A, Subtitle D (Support for Accessory Apartments rule changes)

Testimony by Dorcas Adkins, 3814 Albemarle St. NW, Washington, DC 20016

Thank you for the chance to testify on the subject of proposed changes to the Zoning code with regard to accessory dwelling units (ADU's) in low-density neighborhoods.

For over thirty years I have owned a home in Tenleytown. When I bought it in the '80's it was priced within my moderate means but over time home values have increased six- or seven-fold. Now most of the houses around mine are owned by couples with dual professional careers. Young couples with children are unusual and stay-at-home parents almost unheard-of.

My neighborhood suffers more from lack of density than it does from too much. Restaurants inexplicably fail here, decreasing the quality of life for all of us. It suffers even more from the uniformly high residential values that prohibit young people including our own grown children from buying houses of their own nearby.

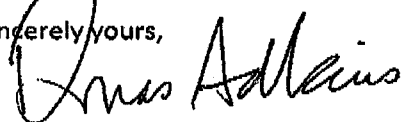
I am speaking in support of proposed zoning changes allowing accessory dwelling units so that many of my neighbors will create low-cost housing units in their basements and their garages. As an ageing resident, I hope to stay in Tenleytown, as much as anything because it's a good place to live once you can no longer drive. A stock of more affordable housing is a sure way to enable me and others like me to do so. We can move into these units ourselves or take advantage of having as neighbors people who can provide needed services for us. As a bonus, we would see increased diversity among Tenleytown's residents, in race, in age, and in profession. A wider price range of housing stock would allow us to enjoy as neighbors a more varied group- house cleaners, maintenance workers, caregivers, and young families with children, many of whom now commute into the area from far out in the suburbs.

While I support the loosening of current restrictions on these units, I don't think they go far enough.

I am disappointed to see that additions and new construction on garages are not included as matters-of-right. Most DC garages, including mine, need second stories added if they are to be practical as accessory dwellings. By requiring us to endure the expense and uncertainty of obtaining a special exception for this, the proposed zoning regulations effectively prevent us from undertaking garage renovations for fear of lengthy and expensive hearings with uncertain outcomes. I understand the need to control the scale of garage additions but this should be included in the matter-of-right provisions.

I urge the commissioners to reconsider this matter so that someday we enjoy a stock of affordable garage apartments gently and attractively increasing density within the buildings that exist now.

Sincerely yours,

 10/30/13

Dorcas Adkins