

Testimony by Tad Baldwin, Chevy Chase DC Resident

Before the D. C. Zoning Commission

Re: ZC Case 08-06A, Subtitle D – Accessory Apts & Corner Stores

My name is Tad Baldwin and I'm a 43 year resident of the Chevy Chase, DC neighborhood and a city planner by training.

I'm testifying tonight in strong favor of the proposed Accessory Apartment zoning regulations for four important reasons.

- 1. These units have the potential of being an important source of affordable housing in an increasingly high housing cost city. The ADU program is a wise way to maximize the capacity of our existing housing stock.
Before retiring, I spent most of my career as an "affordable housing" developer in Montgomery County. Much of my time was spent seeking grant funding to write down the costs of apartment rehabilitation projects, especially when total development costs for modest two bedroom units began to soar over \$200,000. There will never be enough subsidy funds to make an adequate number of new or rehabbed units affordable to lower wage workers.**
- 2. Diversity in neighborhoods can be achieved by the presence of smaller rental units in ownership communities. ADUs will provide room for both younger and older residents, two groups with special affordable housing needs. Diversity makes life more interesting. Some critics think this program will lead to "stranger danger" but I consider that additional eyes on the street are far more beneficial, especially in neighborhoods such as mine which is largely deserted (except for the elderly) since the two wage earners are gone all day.**
- 3. Additional income will be generated by elderly homeowners to help them afford to remain in their neighborhoods. Reduced retirement income is sometimes not enough to afford today's costs.**
- 4. Allow homeowners to become law-abiding citizens again. There is currently widespread violation of the existing law with existing and new, often basement, apartment units being rented to unrelated individuals. The new proposed code is more restrictive in the number of ADUs permitted but it is a more reasonable statute. The required presence of a homeowner in principal residence provides ample controls.**

The one change that I would suggest to this section of the proposed code is a reduction in the minimum square footage of 2,000. My own four bedroom, 2 and ½ bath home is assessed at nearly \$1 million and it falls below this minimum in size. I'd suggest 1,750 sq. ft. as a more reasonable minimum; more than half of DCs homes would be excluded at the current 2,000 sq. ft. level.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight.