

**Testimony by Gerald Fittipaldi, Petworth resident**

**Before the D.C. Zoning Commission**

**RE: ZC Case No. 08-06A, Subtitle I – Downtown Zones**

**November 14, 2013**

**My name is Gerald Fittipaldi. I live in Ward 4. I'm here to voice my support for eliminating parking minimums downtown.**

**There are two problems we are trying to solve. Number 1 is wasted space and Number 2 is wasted time. Regarding wasted space, we are trying to prevent developers from building excessively large parking garages. When too much parking is built, valuable space is wasted. I'm going to give a local example, albeit one outside of the downtown area. This comes from Jeff Speck's recent landmark book "Walkable City." DC USA in Columbia Heights - which includes Target, Best Buy, and Bed Bath & Beyond - was built a few years ago. DC zoning laws called for a minimum of 2,000 parking spaces to be built. The District allowed this to be cut in half. "The designers predicted that this would still be too much parking. The project went ahead with a \$40 million, taxpayer-funded underground garage holding one thousand cars." What happened? "The stores are thriving and the garage is empty-so empty its managers routinely shut off one of its two levels completely, an unvisited \$20 million underground air museum." (Speck, pg. 97)**

**The second problem of wasted time relates to traffic congestion. DC's roads are already clogged. We need to provide incentives to get people to consider not driving solo. When too many people drive themselves to work, everyone else suffers. Bus riders must endure unnecessarily long trips, while pedestrians and bicyclists face much stress, risk to their safety, and exhaust fumes. When we let the free market decide how much parking should be provided downtown, rather than one-size-fits all zoning codes, many things will follow. Instead of building excess parking in residential areas, developers will be allowed to build more units of housing, helping to lower rental costs. Owners of office buildings, as well as employers, will seek out creative ways to incentivize employees to travel by alternative modes to lower parking costs.**

**I'm now quoting from Alan Durning, Executive Director of Sightline Institute:**

**"Freeing cities from parking quotas [or minimums] also stimulates sharing. Office buildings, which need daytime parking, can partner with condo towers which need nighttime parking. Stores (daytime) and theaters (evening) can team up; as can schools (weekdays) and churches (weekends)."**

**I'd also like to iterate the importance of improving our current system of on-street parking to achieve the goal of reducing congestion.**