

Hearing for Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners on ZRR // January 30, 2014

Chairman Hood and members of the Zoning Commission:

I want to express my support for the Office of Planning's effort to rewrite the Zoning Regulations. I appreciate the public outreach that the Office of Planning has conducted over the last four years, as well as the significant efforts to engage the public and listen to our input.

Regarding the substance of the zoning rewrite, I am particularly excited about the changes and modifications that will encourage local living and the building and growing of more livable communities inside our city.

In particular, I appreciate the addition of language that thoughtfully allows for neighborhood retail in areas currently underserved in that way. As the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for the Navy Yard neighborhood in Ward 6, I found this comment on a DC-focused blog very representative of my own feelings:

"There's a tiny corner store on 3rd and K SE called Cornercopia – they sell a variety of necessities and gourmet luxuries, and also hot coffee and sandwiches to go. I have gone there for morning coffee, and occasionally for lunch. The coffee and food are great – I guess they sell the other stuff to the growing population of new residents – some of whom are car free and may want something in between deliveries, or who have cars and want something in between supermarket trips. [...] It definitely fills a niche, and doesn't seem to create any nuisance for the neighborhood. I wish we had a lovely little place like that in my neighborhood, but our low density militates against it, and the zoning probably makes it impossible."

Any neighborhood in the city would be lucky to have a shop like Cornercopia move nearby. It is places like these – where store owners know your name, you bump into neighbors, and you can shop without having to go an inconvenient distance – that make DC an attractive, vibrant, and sustainable city, and they should be encouraged and allowed in all neighborhoods.

Another change I am proud of is the language that allows for accessory apartments in owner-occupied single-family houses. In order for this city to be truly sustainable, we need to allow for a greater variety of housing types for a greater variety of incomes, and we need to allow new ways for people to maximize the usability of their properties. Allowing accessory dwellings is one tangible way – that's been done successfully in other cities – to help address those needs.

Lastly, I am grateful for the language that thoughtfully addresses that fact that parking minimums in this city have been far too high for far too long. The neighborhoods in this city that are most treasured are the ones with the least amount of available and easily accessible parking. There are, of course, nuances to each situation, but more parking typically only encourages more driving, not the creation and evolution of better

neighborhoods. Also notable is the expense required to build required parking, which could be going toward a higher level of architecture or greater housing and leasable space affordability. In a city extremely well served by other forms of both personal and public transportation, it's time to formally acknowledge within the Zoning Regulations that car-based transportation isn't the only way people get around, and shouldn't be the basis for how our city is built going forward.

Thank you,

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