

Views Regarding Changing the Zoning Rules for Building Residents in Alleys and Parking -- Submitted by Marcus Peacock and Donna McLean of 308 A Street NE

We have lived on Capitol Hill for over 20 years and love the fact that DC has protected the historic nature of the neighborhood while maintaining city's laws and zoning rules which support families.

We live on a block that has 10 alley lots that are currently being used as garages and/or studios. We have a clean, safe alley. We are concerned that the proposed changes to the zoning rules could abruptly and negatively alter our alley and reduce the value of our home, the homes on our block, and the homes on A Street NE.

We believe that the current rules on alley dwellings allow for proper neighborhood involvement when and if a proposal is made to alter an alley lot into a dwelling. We do not support the proposed zoning changes.

If the ANC and zoning board believes that the proposed zoning rules are needed, we strongly suggest a change that would require additional zoning board restrictions and neighborhood review if more than 10% of a block's alley lots were to be changed during a 24 month period. This change would still allow one or two resident's to alter their garages. But in cases where a group of alley lots in a single block were to be altered into residents, additional zoning restrictions would apply to protect homeowner's investments and concerns.

I also want to say that the zoning changes that would allow building additional dwellings without parking is a poor policy choice. No one should knowingly support urban change that increases density while allowing car ownership options beyond capacity. The result of the proposed zoning changes will be neighborhoods with too many cars and no parking, forcing a traffic and parking crisis. There is a solution, and that is forbidding zone parking stickers to residents of new dwellings built without parking. With this change, we will support additional dwelling construction without the byproduct of clogging our streets. If the city does not have a system to implement this change, then the zoning change should not occur until a system is in place. More construction without parking while granting street parking permits is simply irresponsible urban planning.

We generally support the improvement of property in the neighborhood, but we also love Capitol Hill because of the number of families that live here. Our block is already busy; we are close to the Capitol so people park on our street to visit Congress, the Folger Theater, attend events at the Frederick Douglas Museum, and attend several churches in the area. The thought of having 10 new residents in our alley without parking will be part of the death of our family block.

Capitol Hill has certainly changed over the years; and mostly for the better. However, sudden and dramatic change to our residential density and parking situation would be detrimental to our home value, our families, and our elderly. We strongly urge an additional provision that increases the zoning and neighborhood review before more than 10% of an alley transitions to dwellings in a 24-month period. In addition, the new zoning rules should forbid zone parking stickers to new construction that choose to build without parking. Thanks for your consideration of these comments.

Marcus Peacock and Donna McLean