

# **Testimony of Eugene Puryear**

## **Candidate for D.C. Council At-Large**

### **Statehood Green Party**

#### **Zoning Regulations Review (ZRR)**

#### **February 12, 2014**

Good evening,

The Zoning Regulations Review is a process massive in both scope and importance. It touches on a wide range of issues that require careful consideration. In particular, I want to focus my testimony around the important issue of housing affordability. According to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, the District is in need of 79,000 affordable housing units immediately. While there are a range of measures to ensure more affordable housing is constructed, Zoning Commissioners have the ability to increase the District's stock of affordable housing by altering the eligibility requirements for Inclusionary Zoning, as well as increasing the percentage of Inclusionary Zoning units in new developments.

Currently, the eligibility for IZ units is determined using Area Median Income (AMI), which includes some of the wealthy surrounding counties. This skews the definitions of affordability upward, allowing developers to promote what are functionally market-rate units as "affordable."

Alternately, Zoning Commissioners could amend the eligibility requirements in one of two ways.

The first way would be to amend the criterion by using DC Median Family Income (DMI) as opposed to AMI. In FY 2013, AMI was \$107,300 while DMI was \$87,400. If, just for example, housing that qualified as affordable meant income between 30 percent and 50 percent of the metric, we can see how drastic a change this would be. Using AMI the range would be \$32,190 to \$53,650. Using DMI, the same range would be \$26,220 to \$43,700. This is extremely relevant. In 2010, over two-thirds of those with incomes *below* 30 percent of AMI paid more than half of their income to housing costs. So changing the metric to DMI would have a significant impact on opening up housing opportunities for those most crippled by the high cost of living in D.C.

The second way to amend eligibility requirements would be to define low-to-moderate income households in relation to the Federal Minimum Wage (FMW). At current levels, the yearly income at FMW for someone working 40 hours a week is \$15,080. So if we set the range of

affordability, again just as an example, at 100 percent to 200 percent of the FMW, it would be \$15,080 to \$30,160 So again you can see the significant effect this would have on those most affected by severe housing burdens.

Further, Zoning Commissioners also have it within their power to increase the required square footage devoted to IZ units I urge Commissioners to revise this percentage to upwards of 20 percent

Finally, I urge the Zoning Commissioners to take into account the very pertinent concerns raised by some regarding the timeline on which impact reports are released to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and the public. It is crucial that ANC commissioners and concerned residents be given sufficient time to prepare their support or opposition to various proposals I also urge similar consideration to the testimony and proposals put forward regarding special exception requirements for so-called "Big Box" stores

Thank you

**Eugene Puryear**

**Candidate for D.C. Council At-Large**

**Statehood Green Party**

Campaign HQ 202-556-1651

Website: EugenePuryear.com

Email: info@EugenePuryear.com

Twitter @Eugene4DC / @EugenePuryear

Facebook: /Eugene4DC