

Written testimony under ZRR Case No. 08-06A

February 13, 2014

My name is Chrissy Martin. I was scheduled to speak at the ZRR hearing for Wards 1 and 2 on February 13, which was cancelled due to inclement weather. As I am unable to make the hearing rescheduled for February 26, please accept my written testimony.

I'm 30 years old and I've lived here in DC with my husband at 1601 Argonne Place (The Chalfonte) for 3 years now. I've never testified or even participated in an ANC or Zoning Commission meeting before. However, I am here today in support of the proposed update to the DC zoning codes, especially the revised parking minimums and the allowance of more corner stores, because I truly love my neighborhood. I love my neighborhood because my husband and I, like 40% of the households in DC, don't own a car, and have never felt the need to purchase one. We can walk to buy groceries, go out to eat, or shop locally, and when we need to go farther we have easy access to two bus routes and to the metro. We both have annual Capital BikeShare memberships, often use DC taxis, and use the Zipcar that is just steps away from our front door whenever we need to drive out of town.

I love my neighborhood because it is dense, walkable, and diverse, and because of that, I choose to pay higher rent than I would elsewhere. As my husband and I look to put down roots and to buy a home, we understand that to stay in the District of Columbia we will be choosing to take on a higher mortgage. Sadly, after months of searching, many of my friends, married couples with two middle- to high-income jobs, have already given up the idea of purchasing a home with the District, and either continue to rent or have moved to a suburb. As for my husband and I, simply put, we cannot take on the higher cost of a mortgage here in DC and own a car, which entails gas, insurance, and host of other costs. I have seen signs in my neighborhood protesting pop-ups; I too would like to maintain the old character of the neighborhood. However, I hope that this can be done through other mechanisms besides parking minimums, which ignore that many residents in our neighborhood choose to, or cannot afford to, own a car. I want to stay here, but without affordable family housing I won't be able to – and since the cost of building parking dramatically drives up the cost of housing, I urge you to re-consider parking minimums.

I also urge to consider that as more young families choose to take advantage of the incredible public transit and bike and car sharing options available in this city, corner stores will be vital to ensuring that we all can walk to get a carton of milk. This walkability is why I love my neighborhood, and why I recognize my neighbors who shop at the same local stores and frequent the same bus routes, a familiarity that simply would not exist if I always traveled in my own vehicle. This walkability is why I choose DC over my home state of Virginia, where I feel that I spent too much of childhood sitting in traffic. And it's why ask you to consider the changes to the Zoning Code today.

Sincerely,

Chrissy Martin

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chrissy Martin". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

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