

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

**Testimony in Support of Case No. 80-06A, Subtitle C: Parking; Subtitle D:
Accessory Apartments, Subtitle E: Corner Stores, by Jeff Speck, 990 Florida Ave,
NW, Washington DC, 20001.**

Dear Mr. Hood:

I am a nationally-active city planning consultant who has chosen to locate his home and office in Washington. You may know my house, which sits at the corner of Florida Avenue and 10th Street NW. With the help of the Board of Zoning Appeals, it was built on an empty corner, a trash-strewn flatiron lot that was unbuildable without three variances to the City's outdated zoning code. This code contains many suburban-style requirements that continue to prevent lots like mine from being developed in the manner that they were built upon historically.

Imagine, a City enforcing a code that prohibits some of the very urban fabric that made the city great! This is the case in much of America, and Washington DC is no exception. Thankfully, the City has a planning department that is working to fix that code, but they can't do it without your support.

I'm sure you are receiving many letters from many others outlining the reasons why you should vote in support of the recommendations from your Office of Planning. I will not add my reasons to theirs, as I doubt I have anything new to tell you. All I want to say is that I am well aware of the positive changes being made in cities all across this country – my clients include Memphis, Oklahoma City, Des Moines, Albuquerque, and others – and I can assure you that the proposals set forth by OP represent the very best of the best practices that are proliferating nationwide.

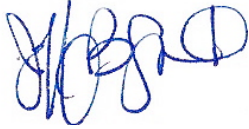
These proposals are not radical, are well tested, and have been shown to achieve the desired outcomes that have been well stated by District leadership. Failure to support these measures would threaten to put the District well behind other cities that it would hope to surpass in quality-of-life and sustainability measures.

Most significantly, these proposals have been introduced with the goal of making life in the District more affordable, the biggest challenge the city currently faces. It is easy for someone with two cars and a nice house to clamor for the status quo. People like this have the time and resources to have their voices heard. But what about those who have no voice, who can't take time off from their two jobs to attend this hearing, and are just

too stressed with paying the bills to participate in civic life? If the zoning commission does not look out for their needs, who will?

I am hopeful that, as the commission votes tonight, it votes not for those who complain the loudest, but for those who need the commission's help the most. These include people without cars, people who are looking for a small accessory apartment to live in, and people who want to shop at a corner store rather than waiting for a bus to Wal-Mart.

Sincerely yours,



Jeff Speck, AICP, CNU-A, LEED-AP, Honorary ASLA

Author: *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time.*