

RE-ZONING OF LANIER HEIGHTS (ZC 08-06-A)

A presentation by Olatokunbo Olowofoyeku
1878 Ontario Place, Washington DC 20009

2/26/14

LANIER HEIGHTS TODAY

Lanier Heights/Adams Morgan developed as a result of the unique culturally diverse mix of local inhabitants including recent immigrants of African descent particularly Ethiopia, African Americans (long term residents since the Northern Migration) immigrants from the Middle East, particularly from Iran, Asians including Chinese, Vietnamese, and from Latin America. They created diverse cuisine, arts, artifacts, food, fabric stores and live entertainment in the local area. A visitor gets a feeling of being in a foreign country while still in the US.

This melting pot is now a magnet for people seeking diversity cuisine and entertainment and the local surroundings has benefited as more people decided to move to the area

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

My family has lived in the Lanier Heights area for the past 15 years and owned our current home for 8 years. It has come to our notice that recently, there has been various commercial alterations of local neighboring single family homes built purely for developer profit without the input of those of us here i.e.:- my friends and neighbors, especially African Americans, who have lived here for over 50 years and are the second or third generation residents of their family homes. I myself have a family of 4 with 2 small children 8 years and 5 years old, going to HD Cooke, the local school.

I believe it is now urgent to re-zone to ensure that future needs of the area are catered for by maintaining the character of our neighborhood so that families can bring up their children, without fear, with all the necessary local amenities, parking, schools restaurants and shopping. The re-zoning must seriously consider the needs of the expanding family who are starting with kids and need existing single family homes in our area and not the expensive micro-units developers are building. A

good mix that supports the needs of local residents and does not drive them away for profit oriented developers who do not live in the neighborhood nor plan to live here.

We do not want our neighborhood changed to suit mostly transient communities.

RE – ZONING RESTRICTIONS

We propose that our re zoning needs limit any future alterations of single family units to no more than 2 units on one plot, where a basement with an in law or rental unit is allowed. The building should not occupy more than 60% of the land area. It should not be higher than existing properties in similar plots. No pop ups should be allowed. It must provide parking especially where such space previously existed. (To park a car after 7:30pm sometimes can take 30-45 minutes)

Particularly on my street Ontario place, the original garden at 1839 Ontario place has been converted to an ugly gigantic structure. It dwarfs every other building on the street.

There are already available local small rental units plus major Condominium developments of the Old Ontario Theater at 17th & Columbia rd., the Exxon at 18th & Adams Mill rd., and by the Fire Station on Lanier place, to cater for new residents who are looking for condos or small rentals. We must ensure that existing small family homes remain as family homes. We must ensure that we can pass on the benefits of diversity living in Lanier heights to our children

SPECULATORS

Speculators are now creating a Vulture Development Zone in Lanier Heights, driving up property prices to unreasonable and unsustainable levels and of course campaigning to maintain the status quo. A free for all market, where their deep pockets drive out families wishing to purchase affordable single family homes to live in.

Recently, I have particularly noticed the same developers wrongly referencing diversity only as financial diversity while using this as an excuse to break up existing homes. It shows they have no clue about our area.

The financial crisis of 2008 and subsequent recession is a lesson learned and not to be repeated. It was based on property speculation. Drive up prices to unsustainable levels—then sell out, and count your profits.

Leave the homeowner to take a fall. We must not let Lanier Heights become a future victim of smooth talking developers.

Over the past year our home and street has been inundated with mail from these developers especially SPEEDY BUYERS.COM /WMD PROPERTIES/WALNUT STREET DEVELOPMENT all based at 4201 University drive, Fairfax Va, Suite 200, tel. 202 630 0013, 202 355 9456. (A Virginia office, with DC telephone numbers, the same individuals going by different names to confuse local residents) ie:- A recent circular sent to our home is attached.

Particularly on my street Ontario place, the original garden at 1839 Ontario place has been converted to an ugly gigantic structure, which leans into and over the next lot's property. (Who is to know whether this contributed to the recent deaths of 105 years old, Mr. Saunders (the next door neighbor) and his son 2 weeks later –January 2014. Mr. Saunders lived here over 50 years and used this vacant plot as a garden for several years.

FUTURE VISION FOR LANIER HEIGHTS

Development is welcome in Lanier Heights. But such development must not destroy the fabric of our neighborhood and our unique multi ethnic cultural diverse society by carving out our homes for short term profit. There are currently 4 major Condominium Developments already planned for the area. These are reasonably priced alternatives and offer the same type of space as the pop ups as well as more amenities.

Owner occupiers are already investing in their homes, fixing them up, re-roofing, resurfacing bricks, landscaping, modernizing their bathrooms, kitchens, garages, painting, etc. These activities need encouragement and not frustration.

The re-zoning of Lanier Heights must protect existing family homes as a matter of priority and urgency.

We wish to maintain the current character of our neighborhood to welcome new families with or without children, continue to support long term African American residents, maintain the diversity of the local population, continue and expand the cultural enrichment of the area

Our area is unique in DC like China Town used to be. The uniqueness must be preserved at all costs and not be allowed to deteriorate like china town did which is now a ghost of its former self.

“We must not kill off the goose that laid the golden egg.”

RECOMMENDATION FOR NEW ZONING FOR LANIER HEIGHTS

1. Do not allow developers to break up existing single family homes to create multi-unit properties. Redevelopment of such properties must be restricted to a maximum of 2 units.
2. Do not allow such future developments to occupy more than 60% of the land and space in the plot previously or currently occupied by a single family home. Following this rule will prevent developers blocking current direct access to sunlight for existing homes and their gardens. It infringes the neighbor's living space.
3. Absolutely no pop ups are to be allowed. There must not be any extra story added above currently existing family homes or properties occupying nearby similar plots.
4. Insist that each new home provide minimum parking requirement for one/two cars.
5. Gardens, Leisure areas (unbuilt areas in a plot) are necessary for exercise and the wellbeing of city dwellers especially where you have more than 2 occupants or children in the home.

You can reach me us at tobyfoyeh2@gmail.com

Olatokunbo Olowofoyeku Family



RE: 1878 Ontario Pl Nw

January 22, 2014

Dear Sophie Rigny,

As you know, the residential real estate market is strong – making it a “seller’s market”. If you are considering selling your home, now is a great time to explore your options, and we hope you will consider calling Walnut Street Development (WSD).

Who is WSD?

- WSD is a homebuilder
- We buy lots with existing homes on them, and rebuild a new house
- Then we resell the new home, about a year later
- It’s very hard work, but we love that we do
- We’ve sold over 1,000 homes in VA, DC and MD
- Check out more pictures of our work at WSD.com

Why sell to WSD?

- Zero Commissions – Our average seller saves \$18,000 in fees
- No repairs needed – We’ll buy your property in any condition
- No Contingencies – There are no inspections or appraisals
- Flexibility – You can chose a settlement date that works best for you
- Certainty of Close – We make cash offers

Here is how the process works:

1. Call **202-355-9456** or **sales@wsd.com**
2. If you call one of our receptionists will ask for your name, phone number, email and property address. The call takes only 30 seconds.
3. Then a Property Value Specialist will contact you promptly to discuss the property and make you an offer.

Are you curious how much your house is worth? With just one simple 30-second phone call, you can get a hassle-free, no obligation offer.

Sincerely,

Jon Ferris

WSD Homes
sales@wsd.com
202-355-9456