



Neighbors Inc.

P.O Box 55624
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November 13, 2013

Testimony for the DC Zoning Commission - Case #08-064

Subtitles H, Chapter 3, Takoma N-2 District

Presented by Loretta Neumann, Neighbors Inc. Board Member and Past President

Chairman and members of the DC Zoning Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Neighbors Inc. (NI) is a non-profit DC organization, founded in 1958 to foster and maintain integrated neighborhoods in North Washington, DC – the entire north end of Ward 4. Our membership includes Shepherd Park (including Colonial Village and North Portal Estates), Brightwood, Takoma and Manor Park. We have long been involved in zoning and other issues in these neighborhoods. I am a long-time DC resident (nearly 45 years), was a former ANC commissioner, and have been active in several organizations that have taken stands on many zoning matters in Ward 4 and elsewhere in DC.

NI's current board was elected at the annual membership meeting on September 22, 2013. The first meeting of the new board was on Oct. 29, at which time the board discussed the proposed zoning re-write and voted for me to testify on their behalf at this hearing. Hence we were unable to provide a written statement to meet the Oct. 28 deadline.

Tonight I am testifying on Subtitle H, Chapter 3, a new **“Takoma Neighborhood Mixed Use Zone (N-2).** It appears simply to combine current zoning with a commercial overlay that was adopted several years ago, but it is hard to tell. Also, while the area in the zone is entirely within the Takoma Historic District, no mention is made of that, whereas among the purposes of the Cleveland Park N-3 District the text specifies:

“Encourage compatibility of development with the purposes of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978, effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Law 2-144, as amended; D.C. Code §§ 6-1101 to 6-1115 (formerly codified at D.C. Code §§ 5-1001 to 5-1015 (1994 Repl. & 1999 Supp.));”

We recognize that this language was not included in the original text for the Takoma Overlay District,¹ and therefore request that the Zoning Commission **add it to the purposes of the new Takoma N-2 District.** And we further request that OP provide a more detailed explanation of how the Takoma N-2 District differs from current zoning. Absent this information, we cannot make an informed statement for or against its provisions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

¹ The Takoma (TK) Neighborhood Commercial Overlay District was established to reserve sufficient open space to provide adequate light and air to encourage retail and service uses and for pedestrian circulation around the Takoma Metro station; to require a minimum clear floor-to-ceiling height on the ground floor sufficient for neighborhood-serving retail, service and office uses; and to allow and encourage residential development to help meet the need for housing, enhance safety, and provide sufficient demand for neighborhood-serving retail, service, and office uses. The overlay provides for front yard setbacks for new construction, including additions, as well as a minimum ground floor ceiling height of 14 feet for most commercial development (see Section 1310.9 for exception). Those buildings with a minimum clear floor-to-ceiling height of fourteen feet (14 ft.) on the ground floor level are permitted a total building height of fifty-five feet (55 ft). Source, *Summary of Overlay Districts, Updated November 5, 2010, Office of Zoning*.