

Bill Crews

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Zoning Case N. 08-06A

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ZONING REGULATIONS UPDATE Thursday April 24, 2014

Testimony of Bill Crews

Good evening Chairman Hood, members of the Commission. My name is Bill Crews and I come before you today as the leader of Save DC Zoning, a grassroots organization dedicated to ensuring DC Zoning fulfills the purposes of land use regulation not inconsistent with the DC Comprehensive Plan. I also served as a member of the Zoning Regulations Review Task Force.

I served as Zoning Administrator of the District of Columbia from October, 2005, through June, 2007. I also served as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC 6C from January, 2003, thru September, 2005, and again from January, 2009, through December, 2010. Previously I served as Marshall County, Iowa, Zoning Administrator for 4 ½ years in the early 1990s. I also served as mayor of a small city in Iowa for 14 years before relocating with my husband to Capitol Hill.

I have to say up front that based upon the operation of the Zoning Regulations Review Task Force by the Office of Planning which I understand you have heard much testimony about, I stopped attending meetings as being unwilling to be led around by OP. I have great admiration for those ZZR

Task Force members who continued to slog it out. Based upon my experience with District Government over the 15 years I have been a resident of the District, every aspect is a bumpy road.

However, I have been asked to get back engaged as the process moves forward. I understand that while tonight is the last scheduled Public Hearing, the record will remain open for some time.

It is this additional comment period that I intend to utilize in order to review the proposed revisions and provide the Commission with advice from the perspective of not only a resident and property owner of the District, but also as an experienced zoning administrator.

As a preview of the type of comment you might expect to receive from my review let me give you an example:

This example involves the Zoning Administrator's duty to interpret and enforce these proposed new Zoning Regulations. It involves the difference between and among a "Repair Garage," a Gasoline Service Station,' and an 'Automobile Laundry.' The current zoning regulations when listing allowable uses had a provision indicating that "similar uses" were allowed. This gave some interpretative power to the Zoning Administrator. That was because the ZA needed to determine where the line was between Gasoline Service Station and Repair Garage.

In the case of Van Ness Auto Repair, my predecessor developed a new category of use - Automobile Service Center - and allowed it in a zone district as similar to a gas station. In fact it was a heavy duty Repair Garage – engine block rebuilds, transmission teardowns, etc. It took arresting the

operator and a BZA ruling upholding my interpretation and revocation of the Certificate of Occupancy to shut down this illegal use that was having a very negative impact on the neighborhood.

In the proposed regs it appears even more open ended. I don't find either uses specifically mentioned – although I have not read all 900+ pages. I see Transportation Infrastructure, but not in the definitions chapter.

Second “Automobile Laundry” is not defined in the definitions chapter. And I thought this was an update?? Is telegraph office still included? As well, this revision was supposed to use plain language. Wouldn't plain language call this use a “Car Wash?”

On a positive note, that while I do not support the expansion of corner stores, I am happy to see that all trash and waste is supposed to be on private property and not public space.

I will conclude for now. I look forward to providing additional written advice for your consideration.