

January 22, 2015

District of Columbia Zoning Commission

Case ZC 13-08

Testimony by Michelle Mitchell

Alabama Ave/13th Street Tenants Coalition

Honorable Members of the Zoning Commission,

My name is Michelle Mitchel. I live at 3210 13th Street Apt #8 and have lived there for 15 years. I am testifying in opposition to the proposed PUD that seeks to tear down my building due to Sanford Capital's continued lack of consideration for the buildings they own and tenants as a property owner and landlord. Sanford Capital maintains their properties in bad condition, does not respond quickly or often at all to maintenance requests, and does not provide security for the tenants living in their buildings. For these reasons I do not believe that they are a trustworthy company and should not be granted permission to construct a Planned Unit Development where our homes currently stand.

My neighbors and I have had many problems with the condition of the buildings and the apartments where we live, and have made Sanford Capital aware of these many times since they have owned the buildings. Some of these include the following the doors to my closet and bedroom are broken, my carpet is old and in bad condition and they have refused to replace it, there is water damage throughout my apartment causing chipping paint and my kitchen sink to sink into the floor, the refrigerator Sanford provided for me leaks and is constantly filled with water, and there is regularly trash built up outside the dumpster. I've asked them repeatedly to address these issues and they have not.

Sometimes they will look at the problem, say they will come back to fix it but never do. Certain problems that cost them money (such as water leaks since they pay the water bills) they are quick to fix, but not most things we need A few of us tenants in here never had a heating system. Personally I've never used my heating system. I've told them that it's broken and they don't want to pay to fix it My neighbor uses his oven.

To get repairs, Sanford has a system where you call a number and then you wait on maintenance to get back with you. I try to be understanding when they a long time, but most of the time they never address my problems I do not feel that they care about their tenants. They have a slumlord attitude: we ask them over and over again to do certain things in the building or in our apartments and they either get to it on their own time, or they don't at all. I used to call them a lot, and when I would call they wouldn't do anything for me, so it doesn't seem worth it to call any more

To resolve some of the problems in our living situation me and my neighbors have had to come together and come up with other solutions such as meeting with the police and housing conditions court. We still have problems with security though- the police haven't helped much at all because they say they can't do anything without the owner's permission Sanford capital doesn't care who comes in and out of the building, and the front door hasn't been secured since Sanford has owned the building. Truthfully I've never seen anything like it. I've been complaining to them about the security problems in my building for three years Sanford Capital will not come and listen to our security concerns they told me that they had the police on it, but in reality since Sanford has owned the building there has never been enough security. I believe this is mostly due to Sandford's negligence, as well as them aggressively getting people out of the building. There are more vacant units than there were before, which makes the security problem in the building much worse. We never had problems with security under previous ownership. The last owners were very fast to fix anything we called about.

I have never seen any landlord as inconsiderate as Sanford Capital. They have so many properties already that they just don't want to invest in, and I don't think that they deserve to tear these building down and build something new because of their poor treatment of their tenants. I really don't think they deserve to have this property, and I don't think other tenants do either.

Thank you,


Michelle Mitchell

Tenant of 3210 13th Street SE