

January 15, 2015

Chairman Anthony Hood
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Ste 2105
Washington, DC 20001

Re: ZC Case No 14-11

I am here to speak in support of Office of Planning's submission to the Zoning Commission for the amendments to the R-4 zone. I have lived in Adams Morgan for 15 years and in Lanier Heights for 8 of those 15. Lanier Heights is an R-5-B neighborhood that is currently experiencing an alarming amount of rowhome to condo conversions. Where we once saw one or two homes a year get converted to condos, we have recently seen 6 in the past few months. At this rate, the possibility exists that our entire neighborhood could be nothing but condo conversions in the next 10 years. While I hope this is not the case, many residents are beginning to feel the pressure of being forced out. We are being harassed by developer's phone calls and mailings and are starting to see a domino effect where, as one conversion happens; several other neighboring homes are as well.

While it stands true that many of these conversions are legally allowed by matter-of-right (at least in R-5-B), far too many homeowners are wondering where their rights are to the property and neighborhood that they live in. The reason for the domino effect that I previously mentioned can be directly linked to the fact that we are being walled in to our homes. The light and air in most of the backyards of these homes that border on a pop-up have been diminished and virtually eliminated. And now, we are seeing that the backyards are not enough and developers are beginning to build out in the front of many homes, thereby walling people in at the both the front and rear of their houses.

This is not the way to keep long-term residents in the District or sustain a diverse community full of different people and housing options. While some will argue that these condos provide some sort of affordable housing, at \$500K - \$950K, many of them are going beyond the cost of the entire home. While all signs are pointing to the fact that the District is in dire need of housing, the reality is that the city needs a better plan for smart growth in the right areas. What will future generations think as they walk through what were once our neighborhoods and see the hodgepodge of condos haphazardly mixed in with rowhomes? No one wants to live next to a cinderblock wall and that is what we are being given after so many of us have put our lives and our savings into our homes, a place we should find solitude, relaxation and enjoyment. Most of these developers are not here to better our communities, if they were, it would show in their workmanship and their concern for neighbors, unfortunately this is **not** happening – every conversion is done simply to squeeze every penny out of every inch of square footage.

These are the things that are sparking the outrage and cries for help across the city. This is why over 100 different properties in my neighborhood, including rowhomes, condos and apartments are seeking the protection of an R-4 zone. This is of importance.

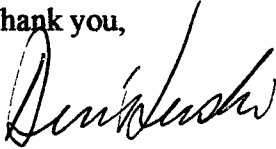
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shows that residents in the rowhomes are not the only ones affected here; any resident in any building has the potential to be impacted by this type of over building.

I feel as though the Office of Planning hit the mark when they submitted their proposal to the Zoning Commission. They heard the residents of the city loud and clear and realized that some type of action needed to be taken. I fully support all of the proposed changes submitted by Office of Planning. Particularly, the amendments to Section 401.3 are precisely the type of change that is needed to save the homes and neighborhoods of this city.

Without these changes, what is happening in the R-4 zones is not consistent with the MidCity Comprehensive Plan. By implementing the changes that OP has proposed the Zoning Commission will help to further the consistency with the Comprehensive Plan in a number of ways but especially by promoting the Conservation of our Row House Neighborhoods (as specified in **Policy MC-1.1.5**).

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denis Suski", written over a horizontal line.

Denis Suski

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