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PENN-BRANCH CITIZENS/CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Post Office Box 6730 Washington, D.C. 20020-6430
Jimmie Williams, President

D C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

January 15, 2015

Re: ZC Case No 14-11¹

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Penn-Branch Citizens/Civic Association in Ward 7 supports the proposed amendments to the D C Zoning Regulations to forestall "pop-up" eyesores in R-4 rowhouse neighborhoods by.

- reducing the maximum height from 40 to 35 feet,
- reducing the height of roof structures to 10 feet and requiring setbacks, and
- eliminating the matter of right conversion of pre-1958 residential buildings to apartment houses

With regard to the last point, the Notice of Hearing suggests that the right to convert contained in Rule 330 5(1)(c) might be retained with the proviso that one or more units will be set aside under the Inclusionary Zoning program at 60% AMI. See p.5 If conversions are allowed freely, they will be undertaken aggressively and the District will lose some of its lowest-density housing stock while barely denting the citywide affordable housing shortage Accordingly, we strongly urge the ZC to bar conversion, i.e., repeal Regulation 330 5 1(c)

While there is a limited amount of R-4 zoned land in Penn-Branch and surrounding neighborhoods (Fort David and Fairlawn), the proposed rules aimed at halting pop-ups merit citywide support We all have a vested interest in maintaining the charm and integrity of Washington's distinctive rowhouse neighborhoods. Second, we all have an interest in keeping at bay eyesores of any sort, whatever regulatory scheme – or the absence of regulation – gave rise to them. For instance, within the past decade, Penn-Branch was faced with a Small Area Plan proposal to allow an 80-foot mixed use building in a C-1 zone Also, Penn-Branch appears tonight to recognize that the Zoning Commission and the Office of Planning acted responsively to citizen pleas for relief on the pop-ups issue We applaud this responsiveness, which we sometimes find lacking

The proposed amendments protect rowhouse neighborhoods in R-4 zones OP and this Commission have been at pains to identify rowhouse districts in R-5 zones and to rezone them appropriately Penn-Branch does not know whether all rowhouse neighborhoods zoned less restrictively than R-4 have been rezoned to match their character If this process had not been completed citywide, we urge its speedy conclusion

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Laura Richards, Coordinator
PBCCA Legislative Committee Coordinator

¹ This issue was discussed, and the authority for submission of testimony was agreed upon by consensus, at the duly noticed January 13, 2015 meeting of PBCCA, at which a quorum was present

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 14-11
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EXHIBIT NO. 126
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