

4213 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20011

12 January 2015 Sunday

Zoning Commission
Office of Zoning
441 4th Street NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Secretary and Commissioners:

As a 30-year resident of Washington, DC, I would like to express my support for zoning changes that are under consideration in ZC Case number 14-11.

Most notably, I write to request repeal of the provision that currently allows conversion from single-family home to multi-family/multi-unit as a matter of right.

The City of Washington is undergoing considerable residential urban densification in several corridors near downtown and/or within walking distance of a Metro station (e.g. Massachusetts Avenue NW, Georgia Avenue, 14th Street NW). However, our neighborhood, Sixteenth Street Heights, is neither near downtown, nor is it near Metro. We live in single-family, semi-detached houses, where most neighbors are families.

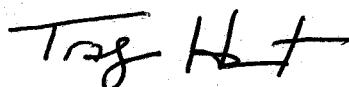
There are three pop-ups so far either planned or under construction within three blocks of my house (1424 Buchanan Street NW, 1444 Taylor Street NW, and 1521 Varnum Street NW). Developers and contractors who have no ties to the neighborhood are flipping these properties and walking away with profits. And what is happening to my neighbors? Cracked foundations, unusable chimneys, loss of ability to make use of solar panels (which were a considerable investment to buy and install), loss of sunlight into windows, etc.

This initial experiment with “pop-ups” has been a disaster in terms of destroying neighborhood character – for example, 1013 V Street NW (“the Monster”). Plus, we have enough issues with storm runoff, sewerage egress, stable electricity supply, not to mention on-street parking, without further stressing existing utility with ad-hoc densification.

Note that this is not a “NIMBY” issue for me. I agree that DC needs further densification; just not in R-4 zoned neighborhoods.

Please adopt the planned changes in order to protect owners, residents, and future residents to Sixteenth Street Heights and our adjoining neighborhoods (Petworth, Lanier Heights, Mount Pleasant) also coping with the predation of “pop-up” developers. Moreover, I am also in favor of even stricter regulations in order to prevent semi-detached row houses from redevelopment.

As a committed, active DC resident, worker, taxpayer, and voter, I ask that you take proper action on this.



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