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May 11, 2015

Dear Commission Members,

I have testified on several occasions before the Zoning Commission on the impact of conversions in the R4 neighborhood in Mount Pleasant. Given the requests made by the Commission to the Office of Planning in 2014, I was hopeful that Mount Pleasant's Historic District would have an overlay similar to Georgetown addressing the unique challenges in our neighborhood. Unfortunately that proposal from OP, formulated at the request of the Commission, was rejected by the Commission.

I was again hopeful that given the comments of some members of the Commission that Mt. Pleasant's unique situation would be addressed in the context of the 14-11. Again, I am hugely disappointed in the proposals now being offered by the Commission.

Three units as a matter of right with the possibility of a 4th would accelerate the decline of single family housing stock in the neighborhood. It is a fallacy to think that houses that have been restructured on the inside to accommodate condo units can in the future be restored to single family units. As I am sure you are aware, single family housing has now been identified as a critical shortage in the District along with affordable housing. The proposals the Commission has put forth will eliminate both single family and affordable housing in Mount Pleasant replacing these units with expensive condo units and in the process deteriorating the quality of the historic district by bump outs in the rear, parking pads in the alleys and other intrusions.

Surely, you must be aware that the community has spoken decisively against what is being proposed as evidenced by the petition signed by over 500 residents which is part of the hearing record. Our ANC has spoken through a unanimous resolution against the proposals. Our current and former Council Member have communicated similar concerns, and our Mayor urged a moratorium against conversions when she was Ward 4 Councilwoman. In short, the entire elected structure of the City that represents the community has spoken against what is being proposed.

It is clear that the proposals exceed the scope of the mandate given to the Commission. 14-11 is not consistent with the approved Comprehensive Plan that defines the broad scope in which the Commission was mandated to act. Please reconsider an approach that reflects the unique challenges of Mount Pleasant. That would include two units as a matter of right and additional units subject to a variance.

Sincerely,

Tom Conway
1833 Park Road NW
Washington, DC



ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 14-11
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
EXHIBIT NO. 200
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