

Leach, Deonte (DCOZ)

From: Carl Smith <carl.smith22@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2015 10:15 AM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Michael Burke
Subject: Zoning Commission Case No. 14-11 - Text Amendments to Chapters 1, 3, 26, and 31

I am writing to oppose the new § 330.7 set forth in the May 1, 2015 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in Zoning Commission Case No. 14-11. Section 330.7 would permit, in R-4 zones, matter-of-right conversion of a residential building existing prior to May 12, 1958, to an apartment house (a building in which there are three or more dwelling units). I think the Commission should reinstate and adopt Recommendation 5 from the OP Report of June 24, 2014. Only by eliminating all matter-of-right conversions can the Zoning Commission provide any meaningful protection for remaining single family homes in Mount Pleasant and R-4 zones in general.

I have lived in Mt. Pleasant for the past 27 years and have been enjoying a neighborhood that supports a large number of families. The large houses here allow families the room to stay in DC instead of moving out to the suburbs as soon as the first children arrive. Numerous residents of Mt. Pleasant have also shown their support for keeping Mt. Pleasant as a resource for family housing in the district in a recent petition that was filed with the Zoning Commission. They recognize that Mt. Pleasant's existing houses, in close proximity to the Zoo and Rock Creek Park, and the presence of Bancroft Elementary School right in the neighborhood all make it very attractive to families.

Keeping the existing single family houses allows for greater flexibility in meeting housing needs. The existence of basement apartments helps new owners meet their mortgage payments or perhaps provide for aging parents. The homes can support several roommates or members of one's extended family. This has been the history of many of the houses in Mt. Pleasant, passing from single family to group house or rooming house and back again. Recent efforts by developers to chop up these houses into apartments and condominiums will destroy the flexibility provided by these homes over the decades. Houses converted into condominiums, with multiple owners, will not be available for the next family to reconvert to single family housing.

Chopping up these houses does not increase affordable housing for families and instead may actually decrease it. An example is 1830 Lamont St. NW, which was sold as an 8 bedroom 4 bath house in 2010 for \$849,000. It was already in use as a four unit apartment building, but since it was still under single ownership, could have been converted back to a single family residence. However, it was ultimately sold to a developer who created four, 2 bedroom condominiums which ranged in price from \$499,000 to \$569,000. As 2 bedroom condos this resource is effectively lost to use by a growing family, and at these prices it is not affordable housing. Even if one were to convince all four owners to sell, the property would now sell for over 2 million dollars making it even less likely that it will ever be single family housing again.

There are numerous corridors in the city that are zoned for multi-story apartments and condominiums that are available for development into studio, one or two bedroom apartments. Two are close by on 14th and 16th Streets. Restricting R-4 districts to two units regardless of lot size will not have a dramatic effect on the availability of such apartments in the city. Nor will it deprive homeowners of significant profits on the sale of their homes, as developers, ever mindful of the bottom line, offer only slightly higher bids to close the sales and do not massively outbid competitors. It will, however, keep an existing valuable resource for families that want to stay and grow in the City.

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EXHIBIT NO. 245
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