

Leach, Deonte (DCOZ)

From: dickbarnes <dickbarnes@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2015 9:27 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Comment on case 14-11

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case 14-11 (Text Amendment--11 DCMR)

Members of the Commission:

I write in opposition to the new Section 330.7 as included in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking dated May 1, 2015, for Case 14-11.

I have been a resident of the Mount Pleasant community for more than 10 years and write from that perspective. I urge you to not adopt proposed Section 330.7, but if you do, at least exempt Historic Districts from its provisions, or, at a minimum, exempt the Mount Pleasant Historic District.

This section as proposed would, in R-4 zones, permit matter-of-right conversion of a residential building existing prior to May 12, 1958, to an apartment house (e.g., a building containing three or more dwelling units). This section would impose certain limits on height and rear extensions in an attempt to prevent extreme "pop-ups" among blocks of traditional row houses.

However, a conversion even under such limitations still constitutes the loss of a single-family house in contravention of a stated purpose of the R-4 zone when it was established in 1958: "the stabilization of remaining one-family dwellings."

In addition to the history of R-4 zoning demanding that matter-of-right conversion of a residential building to an apartment house not be permitted, there are practical reasons:

- In part because of rising prices and in part because of an influx of young, single professionals, condominiums have become a growing portion of the D.C. housing market. They are appropriate in evolving corridors such as 14th Street and on major thoroughfares such as 16th Street and Connecticut Avenue. But for them to displace single family housing in residential communities such as Mount Pleasant is destabilizing of the community, not stabilizing, and tends to discourage both attracting and retaining families in D.C.
- Permitting matter-of-right conversions will increase population density in areas such as Mount Pleasant that are not geographically equipped to handle it. Mount Pleasant has limited street access from the west and even more limited access from the east, and has what can be politely called a competitive street parking situation. Allowing the tripling or quadrupling of the number of households in a single family dwelling that is unlikely to provide any additional parking space will only exacerbate a difficult situation.
- In the economically difficult period following the 1968 riots that destroyed nearby areas, many single family houses in Mount Pleasant became rooming houses. Eventually, recovery came and many of these rooming houses

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2015 JUN -1 AM 10:53

2015 JUN 1 10:53 AM
ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 14-11
EXHIBIT NO. 260
4-11
260

were reconverted back to substantially improved single family dwellings, perhaps with a rental basement. Allowing matter-of-right conversion to three or four-unit buildings would reverse this trend and essentially lead to high-end rooming houses. Some would likely be owner-occupied, but others would be investor-owned; this would tend to reduce the participation in residential community affairs that is so critical for neighborhood issues such as schools and crime prevention.

The Commission has ample basis to not adopt the new section 330.7 – it need merely adopt Recommendation 5 from the Office of Planning Report of June 24, 2014.

Thank you for your consideration of these views.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard L. Barnes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Richard L. Barnes
3150 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20010-2749