

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

ZC Case 14-11

June 1, 2015

Dear Chairman Hood

True Turtle is a small, sustainable real estate developer. We object strongly to the height reduction in R4 zones and other items in case 14-11 as the new regulation that the new text will not further the District of Columbia's sustainability goals. However, as that ship has sailed, we are writing now to voice our need for reasonable roll out provisions.

As a small and I emphasize the word small sustainable real estate developer based in and operating in the District of Columbia's Ward 4, we work hard just to stay in business. We are the only developer I know of who builds LEED Platinum and higher level green homes that are exceptionally energy, water and resource efficient and exactly in line with DC's sustainability goals. I'm not bankrolled by deep pockets and I don't have a large bank account myself. I still live and die by the performance of my next project.

Immediate implementation of the 14-11 text amendment will deeply, deeply impact my business.

As an example, I have one project that is in for permits as you read this. It will be directly affected by the height drop to 35'. I just received my first set of comments from the DCRA last week. It took **11 weeks just to get a first set of comments**. I conservatively anticipate 8 more weeks for resubmittals, questions and revisions prior to permit. That'll be closing in on 6 months to get a permit. I've spent to date ~\$50,000 on design and engineering plus innumerable personal hours wrangling this through the entitlement process.

If the text amendment were implemented right now without a phase in period I would need to redesign my entire building. I would have to go through much of the permitting process again and most importantly, my building will end up being not nearly as valuable as I'd need to lose saleable square footage to comply with the 35' height. This would be financially disastrous for me.

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CASE NO. 14-11

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I am not the only developer staring at the light of this oncoming train. Many that have projects are in a state of panic about getting them in or through the permitting process before this unknown window shuts. People have spent real money on acquisition, design, engineering, estimating and interest based on the current regulations. This change will hurt many.

While I've watched all the testimony on this case and understand your push for speed. However, it's this speed that will literally crush people such as myself who do excellent work along with those who could care less about quality construction and preserving the character of communities.

I respectfully request the following implementation timeline to allow for some grace for those such as myself who are caught in this upheaval:

- all projects currently in the DCRA permitting pipeline be grandfathered to comply with the zoning text they were submitted under and
- allow a short, two month window after final action before implementing the text amendments

Without a doubt, this is a major change to how many who do excellent, thoughtful, meaningful work building and rebuilding the District of Columbia (which I believe is the majority of developers and architects) will be able to do business. Grandfathering and allowing a short grace period will at least let people complete what they've started without too much pain.

Thank you for your consideration,



Tanya Topolewski

Owner, True Turtle LLC