

3266 Worthington St., NW  
Washington, DC 20015  
January 15, 2015

**VIA FACSIMILE**

Chairman Anthony Hood  
District of Columbia Zoning Commission  
Suite 2105  
441 Fourth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

RECEIVED  
J.C. OFFICE OF ZONING  
2015 JAN 15 PM 3:14

Re: ZC Case No. 14-11: **SUPPORT** for Proposed Text Amendments

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

The proposed text amendments to the Zoning Regulations for residential structures located within the R-4 zone go to the heart of the planning and zoning function. The purpose of planning and zoning is to impose order and predictability on the Wild West of real estate speculation, in order to achieve a stable, salubrious, harmonious built environment. Zoning should help ensure that people may enjoy their homes and neighborhoods without fear of losing their investment, or worse, displacement. The proposed text amendments offer some protection.

Speculative builders have found a back door in the present zoning code to disfigure and rezone rowhouse neighborhoods as their business model. Like weeds popping up in a garden after a rainy spell, these awkward multi-unit eyesores have earned plenty of hostility both in and out of the neighborhoods where they are multiplying. Invariably they are absurdly out of scale with their neighbors and even out of proportion with themselves. By undermining the R-4 zoning designation—the intent of which is to maintain a neighborhood of single-family residences—multi-family pop-ups at once express disregard for their neighbors and subvert the character of the rowhouse neighborhoods for which Washington is famous.

The pop-up creates hardships beyond ugliness. It casts shadows on adjoining properties, reducing light, air and privacy; eliminating the potential to install climate-saving solar panels; and where solar panels have already been installed, interfering with residents' ability to utilize their investments. Modifying the ability of property owners to build to a height of 40 feet as a matter-of-right affords adjoining property owners the opportunity to argue before the BZA regarding the adverse impacts of such alterations.

Furthermore, the proliferation of multi-unit pop-ups in R-4 neighborhoods reduces the availability of housing suitable for families. A zoning code that allows the

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EXHIBIT NO. 87  
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Andrea Rosen, LL Case No. 14-11

creation of small units at the expense of family dwellings runs counter to the city's goal of retaining population into residents' child-bearing years.

The proliferation of multi-unit buildings does nothing to add to the stock of affordable housing because these conversions remove \$1,000,000 homes from the market and introduce three to six \$1,000,000+ units in their place. The greater assessed value of the gutted and reconfigured building exerts upward pressure on the valuations of the remaining single-family-homes, which raises property taxes. Invariably, long-time residents are now priced-out of their homes because of the higher property taxes.

In addition, no consideration has been given by planning and zoning to the stress exerted on the already overtaxed infrastructure by inserting three to six residential units onto a street where once there was one residence. Along with the proliferation of apartments in what were planned to be single-family-home neighborhoods is the multiplication of toilets, sinks, garbage disposals, waste, electricity usage, parking spots, and traffic.

I would like to see the proposal go further to regulate not just "pop-ups," but "pop-outs," and "pop-backs." Pop-outs and pop-backs bring with them many of the intrusions of pop-ups. Additionally, covering ever greater ratios of building lots with impermeable materials leads to more storm-water runoff, something the city says it urgently needs to reduce. I am not alone in requesting that the city learn how to align its stated goals with land-use policies.

Thank you for considering this Washingtonian's comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea E. Rosen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Rosen