

Elizabeth Purcell
1607 E Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

November 20, 2014

Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
Suite 210
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re Case No 14-13

Dear Members of the Commission

This letter is to request that the record in this case be held open after November 24, 2014, to at least January 30, 2015. This extension is needed in order to allow the Zoning Commission to receive meaningful input from Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, and also time to address significant planning issues raised by this case

Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners were elected on November 5, 2014. A number of ANC seats in Ward 6 were contested. Candidates for ANC seats were understandably pre-occupied with the election. For example, ANC 6B had multiple commissioners retire, multiple contested seats, and will have seven new commissioners as of January 2, 2015. The new commissioners need time to study and comment on this case. In addition, the ANCs typically meet only once a month. Keeping the record open after November 24, is essential to allow them a meaningful opportunity to participate in this important case.

There are major planning issues that also need additional time to be studied:

R-5 apartment buildings The penthouse proposal would apply to R-5 apartment buildings and many of these older buildings provide affordable housing. Would potential penthouses encourage owners to demolish these older buildings and replace them with new buildings (which are unlikely to be affordable)? This is an important question--DC government encourages affordable housing. Economic studies are needed to determine whether the penthouse proposal would create this disincentive. Or alternatively, if an older apartment building could bear the weight of a new 20-foot penthouse, what might be the appearance of the penthouse? Could it be a frame structure on the roof of a masonry building?

C-2-A. Many people expect that Safeway will eventually redevelop its store at 415 14th Street, SE (outside the Capitol Hill Historic District). The penthouse rule would allow the C-2-A height limit of 50 feet, plus potentially 65 feet with a PUD, plus an additional 20 feet for a penthouse, for a total potential height of 85 feet. In addition, the C-2-A zone on Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, east of the 13th Street historic district boundary, is two-

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and three-story early 20th century buildings, with two-story residential buildings north and south of Pennsylvania Avenue. Penthouses could potentially have a significant adverse effect on the commercial area and adjacent residential area.

Parking. How will this proposal affect the need for parking?

The proposal to allow penthouses citywide has come through the Office of Planning (OP), which needs to spend some time with ANC's and community associations explaining what the impact of this will be to their areas. Not everyone goes to the OP website on a daily basis or is familiar with case numbers, so the penthouse proposal is not different from any other zoning case unless OP has done some outreach.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Purcell", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth Purcell