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2014 NOV 24 **ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 4B01 & 4B02**  
**6856 Eastern Avenue, NW, Suite 314**  
**Washington, DC 20012**

November 24, 2014

Mr. Anthony Hood, Chair  
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 220-S  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case Number 14-13

Dear Chairman Hood

Thank you for extending the deadline for comment on Case Number 14-13, a proposal to allow up to twenty feet, or two stories, as the maximum permitted height of penthouses.

We appreciate your concern about the lack of comment from Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners and Commissions. Commissioners were not adequately informed about this proposal. And we have major concerns with this process.

We have just gone through a six-year Zoning Regulation Review, which the Office of Planning and the Zoning Commission described as a comprehensive zoning revision, and we are now awaiting the Zoning Commission's ruling. No sooner were those hearings over, than we are asked to consider and comment on this new major issue.

Why does the Zoning Commission think it necessary to consider these changes during the holiday and election season? In our opinion, it is not necessary, and the Zoning Commission should completely reject this rush for consideration.

These proposed changes would have a dramatic, negative impact on the character of many communities, including Takoma.

Specifically:

- 1 For example, a mixed-use building in the C-2-A zone that is now capped at 50 feet could go as high as 70 feet as a matter of right and to 85 feet in a Planned Unit Development. These are 40 and 70 percent increases that would negatively affect the streetscape and the quality of life for neighbors, despite setback requirements -- which are minimal and inadequate. Permitting even ten additional feet over the current allowable height is excessive.

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*There is no place in Takoma, even around the Metro Station, where a 70 or an 85-foot-tall building is appropriate, even with penthouse setback requirements*

2. The complex Planned Unit Development process is not a valid remedy for residents. Developers have attorneys and deep pockets. Residents cannot afford to match these resources.
3. Permitting offices and living quarters, and especially bars and restaurants, on penthouse roofs will permanently and dramatically decrease the quality of life for the residents who live close to and below new or altered buildings. This is an unacceptable imposition.
4. Excluding the additional penthouse space from FAR requirements magnifies the impact on neighborhoods
5. The potential for additional income-generating space would not necessarily motivate good design. Those who live next to new matter-of-right buildings outside of historic districts would have absolutely no design input on structures that will tower over their homes, cutting off air and light.
6. The proposal may give developers an incentive to tear down existing buildings, including affordably-priced apartments, for new buildings with smaller units and higher rents. This would further exacerbate the affordable housing crisis in this city.
7. Institutions located in R-zones should not be able to add a penthouse to their buildings and should not be able to put saleable or rentable spaces on their roofs. Nearby residents will get more noise and less privacy.

Sincerely,



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