

Anthony Hood, Chairman
D.C. Zoning Commission
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Washington, D.C. 20001
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RE: Case No. 15-03-1315 Clifton Street NW

Dear Chairman Hood and Members of the Commission:

I am a long time resident of 1315 Clifton Street. I used to live in Brandywine, Maryland, with my auntie. I came to visit my mother in 1953 in the very apartment in which I now live. It was and is apartment 201 at 1315 Clifton Street. That Sunday in 1953, my mother reached into the refrigerator to pull out some steaks. Something happened in her spine. She couldn't straighten up. Through therapy, this was corrected. She worked at the Pentagon. The day she returned to work, she slipped on some water on the floor. Four years later they found she had cracked her vertebrae, not enough to notice at the time. Over the years it worsened to a slipped disk which was discovered when she could no longer walk. She suffered from this the rest of her life and I took care of her in this apartment. If there is a resident who has an apartment that holds the love, the joy and the tears, if there is an apartment to which anyone would be attached, it would be mine.

I am now officially blind. Within a number of steps, and I could tell you how many there are, is my church where I go to Bible studies on Wednesday nights, where they also have a person to help pay my bills and do my laundry. I walk to my grocery store where the manager shops for me. The neighbor across the hall cooks for me and helps me clean. It's only a short ride in a friend's car, to my doctors. I am committed to this neighborhood. I know how to get where I must go. I don't have family. Never married nor had kids. But there's a lot whom I've "adopted." They care for me as much as I love them. They know I will walk as long as I can and do for myself as long as I can, but they are all there for me for what I can't do alone.

Yet, I don't sleep in my bedroom because I hear a rat run up from my radiator, along my window sill and too close to my bed. I can't see it but I hear - not just one. I am afraid to use the bathroom, having heard rats there as well. When I go to the kitchen to prepare what I can, I hear a mouse and sometimes a rat run over the kitchen floor, then across the carpet through my living room. I sleep on the plastic of my living room couch, and hope I am safe.

A first floor apartment would be easier, but I am glad I live on the second floor near the front entrance. For years the front door and back door to the building were not secure. So many people hanging out, so many I overhear from my second story window, doing things I don't want to know about. There's someone who comes in and urinates in the hallway, someone sleeping at one end or the other in the hallway. I wouldn't want to be on the first floor, despite my difficulty in seeing and in climbing stairs. The condition of the building, the hot water outages, the flooding of the basement where the laundry machines are, the odors, the dirty hallways, the grit underfoot, and the way this building has been let go over the many years, makes me sick.

I can't tell you how anxious I feel and inconvenient this move is for an elderly, blind lady who is reliant on others for the daily functions in life. The manager of the building tells me my

apartment is one of the nicest, cleanest, most put together apartment in the building. It's walls are custom painted, the décor is set just the way it always was, and it is clean. It is always clean.

I went to the tenant meetings. I don't want to move. I have family from New Jersey visiting me in mid-summer. It's hard for a person like me to move and get everything back to the way I like it. I want to entertain them in a nice place. Where would I go?

Yet, when I was asked, the buyout or to stay, I elected to stay. I want this building torn down and rebuilt. It's infested. While the option for a buyout offered a lot of money, for a woman like me, having a place I know that is close to those I know is much more important, even if I have to move for a few years. When I think of what I could return to, I say, "Thank you, God. I am just so overwhelmed with something that my heart has desired years ago; something so wonderful. I am so grateful and thankful. Please God, let this happen."

Sincerely,


Peggy Lewis

Apartment #201, 1315 Clifton Street, NW DC 20009

June 30, 2015