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March 20, 2016

Anthony J. Hood, Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Subject: ZC Case no: 15-09

Dear Chairman Hood and members of the Commission,

Please find the resolution of the Kalorama Citizens Association in ZC Case number 15-09 immediately below. This resolution was approved 21-0, by the membership of the KCA at our January 21, 2016 meeting, a quorum being present. We expect to also give oral testimony at the hearing on this matter, Monday, March 21, 2016.

Sincerely,

Denis James
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Resolution of Kalorama Citizens Association Concerning ZC Case

Number 15-09 – Proposal to Re-map portions of Lanier Heights from R-5-B to R-4

WHEREAS Washington’s row house neighborhoods were generally over-zoned in the 1958 Zoning Regulations. Rules for the R-4 and R-5 districts – covering large areas of the city – built-in a bias toward treating row house areas as irredeemably blighted and as grist for the redevelopment mill, and therefore imposed substantially higher heights and greater densities than were reflected in the row house neighborhoods as actually built. For example, the Regulations originally described all of R-4 as an Urban Renewal area in which “substandard buildings” should be demolished and replaced by apartments, which could be done as a matter of right. In R-5 Districts twenty- to forty-foot high row houses were often given height limits of ranging from fifty to ninety feet. Many two- and three-story dwellings ended up with no limit on the number of dwelling units they could contain, and with allowable floor area greatly exceeding their existing size;

- Denis James President
- Mary McReynolds Executive Vice President
- Bob Ellsworth Vice President
- Bonnie Rowan Secretary
- Michael Colonna Treasurer
- Jean Stewart Delegate, DC Federation of Citizens Associations
- Larry Hargrove Delegate, DC Federation of Civic Associations

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 15-09
District of Columbia
EXHIBIT NO. 107
EXHIBIT NO.107



WHEREAS it was only decades later, as the District's population began increasing and the housing market heated up in earnest, that the destructive effects of redeveloping row houses to those more lenient development standards reached significant -- and eventually something approaching epidemic -- proportions;

WHEREAS in response to this problem the Comprehensive Plan contains a large number of provisions that collectively mandate that the scale, character and architectural integrity of the city's rowhouse neighborhoods are to be protected, and that *changes in zoning, including selective downzoning*, are to be an integral part of that protection;¹

WHEREAS, while increase in the housing supply is also an important objective of the Comprehensive Plan, nothing in the Plan suggests that the two objectives are incompatible or that such increase can properly be promoted at the expense of protecting the scale, character and architectural integrity of the city's rowhouse neighborhoods -- in fact the contrary is the case;

WHEREAS in practice the excessive redevelopment of rowhouses pursued under current R-5 zoning tends to reduce the much-needed supply of housing suitable for families with children;

WHEREAS in discharge of the Comp Plan's mandate, the Zoning Commission significantly corrected the mismatch between zoning and the built environment in R-4 districts by its Order No.14-11, which has been carried forward in the comprehensive revision of the Zoning Regulations (ZRR) that will take effect later this year, but the 1958 mismatch in R-5-B districts -- including allowance of an unlimited number of dwelling units and a fifty-foot building height -- remains in the current regulations and is being carried forward in ZRR;

WHEREAS Lanier Heights, as an R-5-B area, has already suffered a significant and growing number of rowhouse redevelopment projects that are incompatible with the scale, character and architectural integrity of its rowhouse neighborhoods,

¹ See, e.g., together with additional Comp Plan provisions set out in OP's setdown report at pp.6-10: Action H-1.3.A (make necessary zoning changes to preserve row houses as single family units); Action C -1 1 A (selectively rezone areas where zoning allows densities inconsistent with existing development); Action MC-1 1 5 (discourage subdivision of single family rowhouses); (Action LU 2.1-C (residential re-zoning to match zoning with existing uses, including in areas zoned R-5-B and higher); Action HP-2.4.C (consistency between zoning and existing buildings in historic districts); Policy LU-2.1.7 (height and scale of structures in rowhouse neighborhoods to be consistent with existing pattern); Policy LU 2.1.9 (discourage additional floors and roof structures on row houses (and apartments), particularly where out of character with other structures on the block, etc.); Action LU 2.1.A (create new zones within R-4 for larger houses) ; Action LU 2.1.B (criteria for roof structure setback on row houses and semi-detached houses).

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WHEREAS the Zoning Commission has previously approved requests to downzone specific R-5-B areas to R-4, independently of the deliberations on ZRR and before the proposal and adoption of the changes effected by Order No. 14-11;

WHEREAS Lanier Heights falls within the membership area of Kalorama Citizens Association,

THEREFORE Kalorama Citizens Association strongly urges the Commission to adopt the map amendment proposed by residents of Lanier Heights and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1C in this case.

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