

**Leach, Deonte (DCOZ)**

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**From:** Andrew Deutz <adeutz@tnc.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2016 7:43 PM  
**To:** DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Subject:** Support for 15-09

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Greetings –

I am writing on behalf of myself and my wife, Stephanie Letourneau, homeowners on Lanier Place, to express our support for R-4 rezoning of Lanier Heights.

We deeply concerned about chopping up and popping up row houses in our neighborhood. Many of the small developers aren't content to stay within buildings' existing footprints and want to put in 4 or 6 or even 8 units replacing a single family house. Directly across the street from us, a developer knocked down a single family house and replaced it with 9 condo units. Along the way, they ripped out decades-old shade trees in our neighbor's adjacent back yard and built a four story brick wall the whole length of the property line. The neighbors have dubbed it the "Berlin Wall." It makes our neighbor's home less desirable and reduces amenity values and property values for existing homeowners. These small developers are appropriating value from others without compensation - and ironically - claim to be defending property rights.

An irresponsible developer on 18<sup>th</sup> St. in the block between Ontario and Harvard gutted a row house and then put a tarp over it and essentially abandoned it for a year. During Snowpocalypse, the tarp collapsed from the weigh of the snow, taking out the horizontal supports and rendering a neighbor's house structurally unsound. Those residents are still not back in their home.

We want to avoid the day when we would have to explain to our children why a developer who purchased the house next door gets to rip out the 90 year old shade trees in our backyard – trees that are home to resident squirrels our children have named – any why our costly landscaping design will be blighted by a four story brick wall blocking the view and the light and the breeze. And we want to avoid ever having to undermine the sense of security we have nurtured for our children in our home by explaining why we have to move out of our home because – thanks to the irresponsible developer next door – their bedroom walls might collapse.

The city is gaining about 1000 residents a month - which is a welcome development and needs to be accommodated. However, we want to ensure that our neighborhood maintains a healthy balance of single family homes as well as large and small apartment buildings. We believe that increasing density can best be accommodated by building big buildings on big streets, while keeping little buildings on little streets. So replacing a gas station on Adams Mill with 35 condo units and a derelict theater on Colombia Rd. with 75 condo units is fine – and there is still plenty of underused air space on Colombia Rd. that can be further developed to accommodate density in the neighborhood – without destroying single family homes.

The purpose of the zoning laws is to balance development while protecting the values of existing residents. Right now, we are not getting that balance right.

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 15-09  
ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
EXHIBIT NO. 111  
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Let's agree to increase density in Lanier Heights with big buildings on big streets, and keep small buildings on small streets, and make sure any future row house conversations respect neighborhood scale and don't destroy value for neighbors.

Downzoning Lanier Heights to R-4 and protecting the existing single family row houses will get us much closer to the right balance. The Comprehensive Plan supports rezoning Lanier Heights. Our ANC voted in favor of rezoning Lanier Heights. And we support rezoning Lanier Heights.

Thank you

Andrew Deutz and Stephanie Letourneau  
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