

Leach, Deonte (DCOZ)

From: Christopher Montwill <cmontwill@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2016 7:38 AM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Case 15-09 Opposition
Attachments: Screen Shot 2016-03-07 at 6.25.47 AM.png

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Hello,

My name is Christopher Montwill. I am a current resident of Lanier Heights and I am opposed to the proposed downzoning my neighborhood. I currently reside in one of the converted row homes at 1696 Lanier Place NW #2. I oppose the downzoning proposal for 4 reasons:

1. It does not take into consideration the changing living preferences of recent and future residents

Recent residents and future generations desire urban settings close to public transit rather than larger single family homes which this proposal asks to preserve. This includes starter families, a couple of whom attended the original ANC1C hearing on this subject. Several leading institutions have studied this topic, summarized in this Citylab article: <http://www.citylab.com/housing/2014/05/what-millennials-want-and-why-cities-are-right-pay-them-so-much-attention/9032/>

In order to arrive at an accurate decision, I hope the commission consider the desires of these residents in addition to the current ones.

2. Responsible development of the neighborhood can preserve character, increase architectural diversity, and maintain older neighborhood infrastructure.

Responsible development of the neighborhood's buildings into 4-5 units can preserve character while slightly increasing architectural diversity. My building and a few other in the area have sought to do this by maintaining and updating facades. Please see the attached photo.

In addition, many of the homes in this neighborhood were originally constructed in the 1900s, renovated in the past half century, and have had very little maintenance after that period of time. Redevelopment would bring a welcome update to aging buildings and infrastructure as well as provide move-in ready infrastructure for future residents.

3. It will have unintended gentrification consequences that are not in spirit with the application.

One of the current application's intentions is to preserve a specific type of housing unit with the hope that a certain type of occupant will continue to live in the neighborhood. However, given the extreme gentrification of the special zoning districts in the DuPont area, this seems unlikely without further regulation. In fact, cases of "hysterical NIMBYism" have exacerbated this gentrification as noted in this article in The Week: <http://theweek.com/articles/544551/liberals-have-failed-miserably-stopping-gentrification>

4. While the ANC1C recommendation showed a majority of unconverted row home owners support the proposal, it does NOT take into account the opinions of people in already converted row homes, nor does it accurately reflect the larger community in the adjoining neighborhood.

When both sides sent petitions to our local ANC, the then chair, William Simpson, had both sides remove any signatures from residents in already converted row homes.

First, I do not find that to be in spirit with a welcoming, open community. Second, I feel this under estimates the number of residents who would support this issue in the coming year. With 5 already converted homes in the area and additional 8-10 projects, there can be 28-52 additional new homeowners in the near term who this would affect. (This obviously depends on the number of units in each building, this range conservatively assumes 2-4 units in each building). Therefore, the number of new residents could be nearly *half* of the signatures represented on the downzoning proposal. It seems unfair to have zoning regulations change right when the neighborhood is on the cusp of gaining a significant number of residents.

In addition, the Envision Adam Morgans survey recently conducted by the ANC noted that the neighborhood is made up primarily of young renters. The collective group of petitioners, including the small number of renters who have signed their petition, represent only a small number of voices in the neighborhood when considering the larger population. If this petition is going to have a great impact on character of neighborhood, I believe the whole community should vote on it, not just row home owners who live in unconverted row homes.

In conclusion, I know this is a difficult decision with a lot of passion and history behind it. I realize the spirit of the R-4 proposal is to preserve a neighborhood some residents had over 20 years ago. However, I do feel that the urban landscape has to be adaptable to change in all areas (not just in certain ones) and their proposal would significantly limit that change.

Thank you for taking the time to read my opinion. I respect your decision, no matter the outcome. If you have questions, feel free to reach contact me at the below phone or email.

- Chris Montwill

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