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SUPPORT FOR RE-ZONING OF LANIER HEIGHTS (Case No. 15-09)

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LANIER HEIGHTS TODAY

Lanier Heights/Adams Morgan developed as a result of the unique culturally diverse mix of local inhabitants including recent immigrants of African descent particularly Ethiopia, African Americans (long term residents since the Northern Migration) immigrants from the Middle East, particularly from Iran, Asians including Chinese, Vietnamese, and from Latin America. They created diverse cuisine, arts, artifacts, food, fabric stores and live entertainment in the local area. A visitor gets a feeling of being in a foreign country while still in the US.

This melting pot is now a magnet for people seeking diversity cuisine and entertainment and the local surroundings has benefited as more people decided to move to the area

THE ALTERNATIVE TO POP UPS

Creative town planning with constraints means a city can accommodate new inhabitants without destroying the fabric and beauty of its history. In London, UK, large victorian era homes were converted to flats without popping up or popping back the properties.

There are still many under used and lower density areas in DC including unused lots, warehouses, gas stations, shops and offices. Developers should be encouraged to diversify to other areas in Washington, ie: Anacostia and NE Washington

Ward One is already one of the highest living density areas in DC with all the associated problems of parking space, noise, trash removal, transportation etc.

LOSS OF TEENAGERS

In Ward One, Condo overdevelopment is creating another major statistical problem. We are losing our teenagers. Marie reed and HD Cooke have had major recent financial investment. If we drive away

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 15-09
EXHIBIT NO. 86

future potential students because the single family homes they mostly live has been depleted, the schools will eventually close.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

My family has lived in the Lanier Heights area for the past 18 years and owned our current home for 10 years. It has come to our notice that recently, there has been various commercial alterations of local neighboring single family homes built purely for developer profit without the input of those of us here ie:- my friends and neighbors, especially African Americans, who have lived here for over 50 years and are the second or third generation residents of their family homes. I myself have a family of 4 with 2 small children 10 years and 7 years old, who went to the local school HD Cooke as well as many of their friends.

I believe it is now urgent to re-zone Lanier Heights to R4 to ensure that future needs of the area is catered for by maintaining the character of our neighborhood so that families can bring up their children, without fear, with all the necessary local amenities, parking, schools restaurants and shopping. The re-zoning must seriously consider the needs of the expanding family who are starting with kids and need existing single family homes in our area and not the expensive micro-units developers are building. A good mix that supports the needs of local residents and does not drive them away for profit oriented developers who do not live in the neighborhood nor plan to live here.

We do not want our neighborhood changed to suit mostly transient communities.

RE - ZONING RESTRICTIONS

We propose that our re zoning needs limit any future alterations of single family units to no more that 2 units on one plot, where a basement with an in law or rental unit is allowed. The building should not occupy more than 60% of the land area. It should not be higher than existing properties in similar plots. No pop ups should be allowed. It must provide parking especially where such space previously existed. (To park a car after 7:30pm sometimes can take 30-45 minutes)

Particularly on my street Ontario place, the original garden at 1839 Ontario place has been converted to an ugly gigantic structure.

It dwarfs every other building on the street.

There are already available local small rental units plus major Condominium developments of the Old Ontario Theater at 17th & Columbia rd., the Exxon at 18th & Adams Mill rd now called The Adamo, and by the Fire Station on Lanier place, to cater for new residents who are looking for condos or small rentals. We must ensure that existing small family homes remain as family homes. We must ensure that we can pass on the benefits of diversity living in Lanier heights to our children

SPECULATORS

Speculators are now creating a Vulture Development Zone in Lanier Heights, driving up property prices to unreasonable and unsustainable levels and of course campaigning to maintain the status quo. A free for all market, where their deep pockets drive out families wishing to purchase affordable single family homes to live in.

Recently, I have particularly noticed the same developers wrongly referencing diversity only as financial diversity while using this as an excuse to break up existing homes. It shows they have no clue about our area.

The financial crisis of 2008 and subsequent recession is a lesson learned and not to be repeated. It was based on property speculation. Drive up prices to unsustainable levels—Then sell out, and count your profits. Leave the homeowner to take a fall. We must not let Lanier Heights become a future victim of smooth talking developers.

Over the past year our home and street has been inundated with mail from these developers recently EXPRESS HOME BUYERS and previously SPEEDY BUYERS.COM /WMD PROPERTIES/WALNUT STREET DEVELOPMENT all based at 4201 University drive, Fairfax Va, Suite 200, tel. 202 630 0013, 202 355 9456.

(A Virginia office, with DC telephone numbers, the same individuals going by different names to confuse local residents) ie:- A recent circular sent to our home is attached.

Particularly on my street Ontario place, the original garden at 1839 Ontario place has been converted to an ugly gigantic structure, which leans onto and over the next lot's property. (Who is to know whether

this contributed to the recent deaths of 105 year old, Mr. Saunders (the next door neighbor) and his son 2 weeks later –January 2014. Mr. Saunders lived here over 50 years at 1837 Ontario place, and used this vacant plot as a garden for several years.

PARKING PROBLEMS AND NON CONFORMING PARKING SPACES

Parking is one of the greatest problems in the area coupled with the sometimes illegal and aggressive behavior of Parking Enforcement Workers who many times take advantage of and harass local residents who have to search for parking space sometimes for 30-45 minutes. All developments must be made to abide by existing parking regulations Rather than giving a variance, turning a blind eye or encouraging them to break parking building codes as recently witnessed in the Building Permit issued to 1828 Ontario place, NW, 20009, where Bogdan Builders had been digging below the foundations of two adjoining single family homes without building permit. When the final building permit was obtained, DCRA overlooked the fact that in their plans to provide 2 Parking Spaces they had broken the DC adjoining party wall introduced by President George Washington and passed by an Act of Congress in 1821. Even the enforcement of existing Zoning regulations regulations by DCRA was lax allowing builders to violate parking and yard set back requirements, lot occupancy area of 60%, or the issuing of variance to notify ANC1 and residents within 200ft of the new development etc.

FUTURE VISION FOR LANIER HEIGHTS

Development is welcome in Lanier Heights. But such development must not destroy the fabric of our neighborhood and our unique multi ethnic cultural diverse society by carving out our homes for short term profit. There are currently a 220 room Hotel and 4 major Condominium Developments with about 250 condo units and already planned and being built or completed recently in the area. These offer the same type of space as the pop ups as well as more amenities and do not destroy single family homes as they have been placed in commercial zones Owner occupiers are already investing in their homes, fixing them up, re-roofing, resurfacing bricks, landscaping, modernizing their bathrooms, kitchens, garages, painting, etc. These activities need encouragement and not frustration. We need to ensure that in future

those who wish to move into larger homes that the stock will be there for them.

The re-zoning of Lanier Heights must protect existing family homes as a matter of priority and urgency.

We wish to maintain the current character of our neighborhood to welcome new families with or without children, continue to support long term residents, maintain the diversity of the local population, continue and expand the cultural enrichment of the area

Our area is unique in DC like China Town used to be. The uniqueness must be preserved at all costs and not be allowed to deteriorate like china town did which is now a ghost of its former self.

"We must not kill off the goose that laid the golden egg."

LANIER HEIGHTS CONDO STATISTICS

a) Condos currently being completed	150
b) Condos planned in 7 storey complex (on Columbia rd, replaces Burger King, Payless Old City Café Radio Shack & Vietnamese Restaurant)	100
c) Number of Rooms in New Hotel	220

Y) Number of Single Family Homes at risk	160
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470 Condos/Hotel rooms to 160 Single Family Homes

There is no sense in converting single family homes to provide 4 plus condo Units in light of the above statistics plus there are already existing thousands of apartment units and condo units in the area

RECOMMENDATION FOR NEW ZONING FOR LANIER HEIGHTS

1. Do not allow developers to break up existing single family homes to create multi unit properties. Redevelopment of such properties must be restricted to a maximum of 2 units.
2. Do not allow such future developments to occupy more than 60% of the land and space in the plot previously or currently occupied by a single family home. Following this rule will prevent developers blocking current direct access to sunlight for existing homes and their gardens. It infringes the neighbor's living space.
3. Absolutely no pop ups are to be allowed. There must not be any extra storey added above currently existing family homes or properties occupying nearby similar plots.
4. Insist that each new home provide minimum parking requirement for one/two cars.
5. Gardens, Leisure areas (unbuilt areas in a plot) are necessary for exercise and the well being of city dwellers especially where you have more than 2 occupants or children in the home.

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