

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Laura Heller <lauramheller@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 8:19 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: Written Testimony Case number: 20-34

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the DC Government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. If you believe that this email is suspicious, please forward to phishing@dc.gov for additional analysis by OCTO Security Operations Center (SOC).

Dear Zoning Commission,

My name is Laura Heller and I am a resident of Southwest DC. I have lived in this neighborhood for the last 3.5 years and worked as a school social worker in DC for the last 4 school years.

In my time as a school social worker, I have worked with countless families facing housing insecurity and homelessness in The District. There simply is not enough affordable housing in D.C. for low income and working class families and their children to survive, let alone thrive. With that sad truth in mind, I ask the Zoning Commission to reject The Cotton Annex Development unless or until it is an example of equity and inclusion as per the SW Neighborhood Plan. A truly equitable and inclusive project will include 1/3 market rate housing, 1/3 deeply affordable housing, and 1/3 workforce housing while this project only contains 50 apartments available to those making 50-80% of the AMI. I doubt any of these apartments will be of a size to house families.

The current site is an opportunity for The District to show its commitment to affordable housing. Instead, the District is poised to allow a developer with a known history of mistreating tenants to develop even more housing for the very wealthy. This choice is especially upsetting given that so many luxury apartments are vacant at this time and offering rent concessions while families in need of safe and affordable housing continue to have nowhere to live. What will D.C. look like in 5 or 10 years if we continue to allow development for the wealthy without mandating equal development for the rest of D.C. residents?

Again, I urge the Zoning Commission to reject this development until such time that the developer demonstrates a commitment to building housing that addresses the needs of D.C. residents for safe and affordable housing in Southwest D.C.

Thank you for your consideration,

Laura Heller