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Subject: Substantial Opposition to DC Zoning Application in Case Number 23-02

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Dear Mr. Hood and Members of the Zoning Commission,

This may be the last time I get to have a say so I want to be very open with you. I really want to have some faith in my city government, but with every hearing on 1617 U St. I am disheartened. What I see is that the process taken by the mayor's office OP and OAG lends itself to circumventing community input as a whole, not just the absence of community outreach, it stacks the cards against us and gamed the process.

I'll try to list my observations here â

They say this isn't a project, but they want the zoning changed. That's the cart before the horse and they know once the zoning is changed the community can't do anything about it. The language being used is deceptive and manipulative. Not calling this a project, saying there are no details allows for a lot of vagueness when answering questions. The land at 1617 U St. NW has astronomical real estate value but it's referred to as surplus, some that is no longer needed which betrays its value and importance.

Calling this effort a move to build more affordable housing. We all know that we define things by their primary details, not the lesser ones. This building will have more market rate than affordable housing and nothing says luxury apartment like a penthouse view. That view is why we are having hearings because it requires height. As they say in real estateâ location, location, location, and in this case it's up for that valuable view of the city for those that can afford it and blocking the light, sky and air for the existing residents.

Luxury apartments even with the benefit of poor doors make a community wealthier and whiter. The secondary effect of running out old residents is well documented. This has already happened in our neighborhood and it's why Adams Morgan particularly U ST once Strivers' Row is now almost completely white and the next to be forced out will be white seniors on fixed income. Protecting longtime residents from displacement has not been in the scheme of things even though the city knows it happens. This is more of a feature instead of a bug. DC is particularly affected by racial

economic inequality. Cities like Baltimore, Philly, and New York have white representation in their lower working class and below. DC's lower class is over represented almost exclusively by POC, primarily black. POC now fill the service jobs while whites fill the higher up positions of supervisor and managers. A bit of apartheid in the Nation's Capital. It should be easy to see that these luxury apartments have a hand in it all.

The agencies pushing this 1617 U St. project have not done community outreach or an impact study because they already know what the results will be. This kind of social engineering has been going on in this city for over 10 years and they are willing to make us continue to pay the price for a greater wealthier Washington D.C that will also be whiter.

Moving the police department is absolute insanity when we need to focus on improving policing. The DC government is losing control of the city - homicides are up to 1997 levels, thieves are running businesses into failure, extreme public drunkenness on Connecticut Ave. can rival the French Quarters and shoot outs that didn't even happen in the old west in some communities. Police and Fire, in that order, are just as important as housing. Balance should be the rule not the exception, DC's last obsession was office buildings and look where that got us. City planning is also social engineering and it should be taken with care. We are now more Gotham than Capitol City and our police aren't Batman! What we need at 1617 U St. is a new Police Community oriented Facility. Like this - <https://www.policiechiefmagazine.org/facility-design-for-community-engagement/>

Another luxury apartment is just going to make matters worse and a poor door is no help. We are a materialistic culture and this extreme income inequality helps fuel crime, frustration and anger. It's not hard to see what your better off neighbor has that you don't and some people want to make others pay for that. If there is housing on that land it needs to be just affordable housing, something that the DC gov. cannot and does not do well but Jubilee Housing knows how and does very well. Giving people something of their own fills some of that inequality gap.

U St. is already party central, on the weekends its social media fueled over the top - I do what I want when I want it - behavior that no one can rein in is too common. We don't need to move it down to 16th and U too. The same reason that I heard for putting up another luxury apartment with a poor door is the same reason that makes it a great location for the police station, location, location, location! Plus the police station with its officers contributes to POC in the neighborhood. They are also a place for community and not just about parking tickets and arrests.

This is the revitalization the longtime community sees when the Mayor's Office talks. Looks good on paper and with double talk but the reality is another thing. Single people with high income which translate to almost all white get priority with their also high disposable income. They are the city's cash cows. If the city really wants to restore trust then thoroughly and openly investigate Mr. Falcicchio's wheeling and dealings - that's Deputy Mayor number 2 to resign. Mr. Falcicchio had his hands in a lot of pots and for a longtime. How did no one know what was going on and it's common for malfeasance like that to be just the tip of the iceberg. I bring this up because he also had a hand in the city plans I'm criticizing.

In closing, the plans I heard for 1617 U St. were all dressed up in the altruism of affordable housing but delivered with an indifference to the community. What I really hear and have seen are deals that are quick fixes to fill DC city coffers and make real estate developers fat.

Closing question - If the Mayor's Office and supporting agencies are so concerned about housing, why is it that the Housing Inspection is so dysfunctional and such a failure?

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