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Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2024 12:42 PM
To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Schellin, Sharon (DCOZ)
Subject: Zoning case 23-25 was set down improperly

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November 26, 2024

Dear Commissioners:

Zoning case 23-25 was set down improperly; Chevy Chase residents deserve their rights to a contested case, so that we can present evidence and cross-examine witnesses, and so that we will have the right to appeal a zoning decision.

As a tax paying resident of the District of Columbia I am opposed to giving private developers building rights on public lands, still used for public use.

In addition, I am opposed to an RFP process that was flawed, proposing an outsized 80-foot building height and 60% lot coverage: ignoring and thus eliminating the ball court, children's play area, reading area outside the library and community center and all possible on-site parking.

These are important community resources that will be lost in the process, and their unique role in drawing together diverse users in age, gender, and race in a unique way. At a time when we need to encourage reading in our youth these amenities soften what can become a sterile library experience for young readers. At a time of an aging population demographic, we need to preserve and offer additional opportunities for social engagement and fitness.

Furthermore, I fear for our small businesses given that the RFP includes the potential commercial use of the space. I have no problem with mixed use development to increase the vitality of Chevy Chase DC, but the zoning proposed is completely out of sync with existing land uses and the neighborhood and will NOT result in more affordable housing. The block across from the Wells Fargo Bank next to the bus terminal has not been successful for the small businesses attempting to locate there and would be ideal for low rise mixed use as would the Safeway property. We do not need to give away public land that can never be reclaimed.

Lastly, by passing the proposed rezoning you are providing a gift of public land - the Chevy Chase Commons Park, Library and Community Center - to developers for their personal profit. This rezoning does nothing to lower housing costs in DC. You will, by upzoning the Connecticut Ave corridor in Ward 3, lose 1000s of Naturally Occurring Affordable Homes in rent-controlled buildings. Our Chevy Chase workforce - teachers, police, retail workers, etc. - will be displaced by your actions, as workforce housing has been lost in every other densified and gentrified DC neighborhood. You will displace the Chevy Chase small businesses just as small business have been lost in every other densified and gentrified DC neighborhood. You will harm the residents of the Chevy Chase community with incalculable loss if you vote for upzoning Chevy Chase.

History has shown that once this public land has been turned over to private developers they will be charging high rents and then turn around and sell the development at a substantial profit.

Respectfully,

Martin L. Kerns
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