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Subject: Zoning Cases 23 - 25
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Re: Zoning Cases 23-25

To the DC Zoning Commission:

I submit these comments as a 41 year resident of Barnaby Woods and user of the Chevy Chase Library and Community Center. The citizens of the District of Columbia own very few properties like these in our part of town. While the buildings are aging and in need of upgrade, the property on which they sit is unique and irreplaceable. It serves as an outdoor informal gathering place, close to commercial amenities, but sufficiently separated to provide a place for conversation, contemplation, tranquility and enjoyment among the wonderfully mature trees and gardens.

The DC Zoning Commission is being asked to fundamentally alter a part of our city that has served, and continues to serve, us well. In making decisions of such importance to the citizens of the District of Columbia, it is incumbent on the agency to do it in a way that ensures a full airing of the issues. The process should guarantee that all views were seriously considered, regardless of the outcome. After all, this is a highly controversial set of changes being considered for our part of the city and we have a right to expect that it will be done thoughtfully and fairly.

This is why attempts to end run the process by setting down Zoning cases 23-25 improperly is such a fundamental breach of trust by the Board. Chevy Chase residents are entitled to a contested case, so that we can present evidence and cross-examine witnesses, and so that we will have the right to appeal the zoning decision. The failure to provide for this undermines our confidence in the objectivity of the Board and the District of Columbia government.

To be clear, I am not opposed to affordable housing in Chevy Chase DC. But I do question why it needs to replace a unique and irreplaceable public amenity when there are so many other ways to incentivize private developers to accomplish the same purpose in the same part of town. It is likely that there will be significant new development in Chevy Chase DC offering ample opportunities to increase the affordable housing stock.

The Zoning Board has an obligation to do this right. Don't fail us.

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