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To: DCOZ - ZC Submissions (DCOZ); Schellin, Sharon (DCOZ)
Subject: Comments on Zoning Case 23-25

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Zoning Case 23-25 was set down improperly, thereby depriving Chevy Chase residents of their right to a contested case which entitles them to present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and the to appeal a zoning decision in the case.

Moreover, I am opposed to a zoning process in which the Chairperson of the Zoning Commission publicly and shockingly denigrates the residents of Chevy Chase and the area of Rock Creek West and unapologetically shows his deep bias against the area. He has done this publicly in recorded sessions not once - or twice - but at least three times, even doubling down on statements when their bias was pointed out to him, saying he would not retract his statements or apologize for them. At a minimum, Mr. Hood should not be permitted to have any role in or take any action concerning zoning anywhere in "Rock Creek West" given his clear animus towards the community.

I am opposed to giving private developers building rights by surplusizing public lands that are still clearly being used by the public. Spend a day, any day, at the Chevy Chase Commons and you will see that it is in use by people of all ages and from all corners of DC.

I am opposed to an RFP process that is flawed and biased and proposes to allow an outsized 80 foot building height and 60% lot coverage; ignoring the views of Chevy Chase respondents to the ANC 3/4G survey and eliminating the ball court, children's play area, reading area outside the library and community center, greenspace, and all possible on-site parking, thus creating difficulty for people with disabilities and the elderly and causing parkers to spill into already saturated side streets. Indeed, people with children also apparently need on-site parking, as they clearly use it now.

Given that the RFP includes the potential commercial use of the space, there is reason for concern that our small, locally owned businesses on Upper Connecticut Avenue will be forced out by construction and higher rents post-development. Mixed use development can increase the vitality of Chevy Chase DC, but the zoning proposed is completely out of sync with existing land uses and the neighborhood and even so, will not result in more affordable housing given DC's track record. 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. DC does not need to give away public land and the only greenspace and park on Upper Connecticut Avenue, nor should it. That land and its greenspace can never be reclaimed.

By passing the proposed rezoning you would be providing an unwarranted gift of essentially free public land - the Chevy Chase Commons Park, Library and Community Center - to developers for their private profit. This rezoning will likely do nothing to further the worthwhile objective of lower housing costs in DC. On the contrary, by upzoning the Connecticut Ave corridor in Ward 3, Ward 3 will lose 1000s of Naturally Occurring Affordable Homes in rent-controlled/stabilized buildings. Our Chevy Chase workforce of teachers, police, retail workers, etc. will be displaced by your actions, just 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 businesses have been forced out in every other densified and gentrified DC neighborhood. If DC's objective is to increase the stock of affordable housing, it is working against itself with its unrelenting push for densification and gentrification. The proposed rezoning/upzoning will irreparably harm the residents of the Chevy Chase community, and, indeed, the credibility of DC's affordable housing effort itself.

The history of housing development in DC has shown that private developers will charge high rents for apartments or prices for condos and then sell the development at a substantial profit, particularly since the land will be essentially free to them under the current plan. It is unconscionable that private developers be allowed to profit handsomely from the fiction of building affordable housing at Chevy Chase Commons while depriving taxpayers and residents of their public land forever. There are suitable private sites nearby that can and should be used for affordable housing.

I urge you not to rezone/upzone Upper Connecticut Avenue.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Nagy

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