

March 26, 2026

Dear Chairman Hood and members of the DC Zoning Commission,

I have been a resident of Woodly Park for 26 years. I am grateful for the Zoning Commission's (ZC) decision to reopen Case 25-09 given the many questions asked during the December 1 hearing. This letter is in response to the Office of Planning's (OP) Supplemental Report to the case, addressing issues that concern me.

At the December hearing the ZC asked why front setbacks are not included, suggesting that OP add language to indicate that additions and new construction are subject to review by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB). In its Supplemental Report, OP stated that this "inappropriate." I don't understand the logic behind this opinion. The ZC uses setbacks to ensure that new buildings do not overwhelm adjacent structures. The HPRB employs setbacks to modify designs to enhance their compatibility as an addition to an existing structure and to ensure the new construction is secondary to the existing structure.

The ZC purpose is to ensure development standards allow for transitions from low to moderate density and memorialize this in writing.

There are other zones more appropriate for Woodley Park's commercial corridor that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The ZC should consider the neighborhood's contributing structures, the history of the commercial strip, and how extreme height differentials would permanently change Woodley Park's character. Smart growth should not be exclusive of smart preservation.

Finally, there is nothing in any document OP has provided that ensures that affordable housing will truly come to Woodley Park. Increased density should be accompanied by an increase in the equitable housing opportunities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Spence Kelso
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