

March 2, 2016

Chairman Anthony Hood
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Support for Zoning Case No. 04-33G: Make Inclusionary Zoning more affordable

Dear Chairman Hood & members of the Zoning Commission:

My name is Donna Rosen. I have lived in Washington DC since 1977 and resided in a home in the Friendship Heights neighborhood for 34 years. I am here as a concerned DC resident to urge you to make Inclusionary Zoning more affordable, because we need to use every opportunity to create and preserve more affordable housing.

I am deeply concerned about affordable housing both as a resident of the City and as someone who spent her entire career of over 40 years working in the field of Affordable Housing Finance locally and on a national level, including moderate, low, and very low income. I think that we are not doing enough to address our city's rapidly growing affordability problem. DC has become a very desirable place to live. As a result, housing prices have priced people with modest incomes out of the market in the City. The number of moderate and low-income housing units has decreased significantly due to renovations converting moderate housing to upscale dwellings and demolition of large numbers of low-income housing units in the City. Longtime residents are being pushed out of the City and low wage workers are unable to move into the City to live close to their jobs.

I commend the DC Zoning Commission for creating Inclusionary Zoning, which is a national best practice for affordable housing policy. We have several years of experience implementing Inclusionary Zoning; therefore, we can now celebrate the successes and look at ways to make IZ even more effective in addressing the City's affordable housing needs. Most of the units created by the current IZ policy are at the 80% Area Median Income (AMI) level (\$70,000 for a 2-person household). It is critical that we enable IZ to serve people with moderate and low incomes, which is clearly less than \$70,000 for a 2-person household. I urge the Zoning Commission to take steps to ensure that IZ creates housing opportunities for those who need it most. I ask the Zoning Commission specifically to:

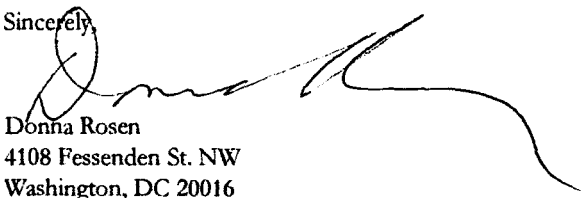
- **Act now to make all rental IZ units affordable to people earning no more than 60% AMI level.** Analysis has shown that this would not have a negative impact on housing production in the City.
- Ensure that city or qualified non-profits are allowed to purchase IZ units and then rent units to people at lower incomes, to help people at a deeper level of need.
- When updating the Comprehensive Plan, use increases in density in exchange for requiring more IZ units be provided at lower affordability levels.

Two important features of the current IZ policy have proven to be sound approaches and should be preserved.

- Keep IZ's current standards that make all affordable units *permanently affordable*. The Zoning Commission should be commended for this policy that ensures that we will always have affordable homes even as many neighborhoods rise in value. This is becoming a somewhat common practice for IZ programs across the country. In the case of DC, this is the first affordable housing program where the affordable homes will last for generations and always ensure that lower income families can have the opportunity to live in neighborhoods throughout the city.
- Keep using IZ to build mixed income buildings and neighborhoods: I also thank the Zoning Commission for ensuring that developers are partners in the solution by creating affordable homes in their buildings, or close by. The principles of these tough standards should remain in place, even as you consider some flexibility. The overriding principle is that IZ has the power to create mixed income neighborhoods and housing opportunities as the city grows. Access to high opportunity neighborhoods is something that IZ offers that most traditional affordable housing programs do not.

I ask you to build on the strengths of IZ, and increase its effectiveness. By ensuring IZ creates truly affordable housing at the 60% median income level, IZ can make a much larger contribution to the severe housing challenges faced by our city. We need to ensure that we are using this powerful tool to its full potential. Thank you for your concern for making the most of Inclusionary Zoning and making DC a welcoming place to moderate and low income people. I appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,


Donna Rosen
4108 Fessenden St. NW
Washington, DC 20016

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