

## OPENING STATEMENT

*Elissa Silverman, At-Large Councilmember*

Good evening, members of the Zoning Commission. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you this evening. I am here to strongly encourage you to vote in favor of the recommendations for improvements to the Inclusionary Zoning program that are being presented by the Coalition for Smarter Growth and other Inclusionary Zoning advocates.

Specifically, I encourage you to vote in favor of the recommendation to lower the maximum income level for rental units to 60% of the Area Median Income. Study after study has shown that our city has a critical shortage of affordable housing units, especially for people whose income falls below 60% of the AMI. This shortage forces people who work in the District to move to neighboring states and face long commutes to work every day. It forces families who stay in the District to spend the majority of their income on rent. And, it is contributing to our growing number of people suffering from homelessness.

Tonight you are going to hear that making the proposed changes to the IZ program would cause developers to slow or stop their plans to build in the District and that it would cause projects currently in development to slow down. At this point, no one has shown me evidence of this. In fact, last year we set a 25-year record high for residential construction and 10,000 new rentals are expected to come online by 2018. It seems to me the market is active enough to tolerate a regulatory change. And, when the IZ program was first introduced, projects in the pipeline at that time were not required to meet IZ requirements. So, it doesn't appear those are valid arguments against the changes proposed in this application.

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EXHIBIT NO. 153

You will also hear that IZ requirements drive down land value. There is evidence however, especially in high rise zones, that developers are actually seeing values of their land increase in excess of what the bonus density is designed to provide. At this point, the District receives nothing for creating that inflated value. It seems to me that lowering the income targeting to a level that meets a serious community need is a nice exchange for increasing the value of a property.

I also disagree with the argument that the proposed changes should be rejected because DHCD should continue improving its administration of the current program before making any changes to it. As a representative of our city, I find this argument particularly troubling. Our local government should be able to do two things at once. There are still problems with the administration of the Inclusionary Zoning program and I find that very frustrating. However, improving that administration shouldn't be thrown off by making simple changes such as lowering the income targeting. And, if it is, we have a much bigger problem than our IZ program.

I am particularly troubled by the Office of Planning's recommendation to expand the allowance of off-site units and ask that you be very careful about changing this section. The point of the IZ program is to ensure we have production of affordable units in high opportunity neighborhoods. If we're going to allow off-site provision of these units, we need more than a 20% increase in the number of units and we need to ensure the goal of providing affordable units close to jobs, services, and educational opportunities.

Like everything else about governing in the District, our Zoning Code is complex. I know you agree that changes to the Code should not be made quickly or without adequate thought and study. Inclusionary

Zoning has been studied. It has been proven to produce new affordable units in neighborhoods where they are badly needed. It is also our best option for ensuring that our lower income neighbors have access to the same opportunities, education, jobs, and services that people in our high opportunity neighborhoods have. And, at this point, we have no evidence that it has negatively affected the city's growth or production of other housing units.

I know the work you do is complicated and you will hear differing opinions from a lot of people. I believe in this case, you have the opportunity to help address one of the most serious problems our city faces right now. You can help increase the number of affordable housing units in areas of our community where they are sorely needed.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you tonight and I look forward to learning your decision in this case.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Alvin C. De..." with a long, sweeping tail.