

Testimony by Claire Jaffe
In Support of ZC No. 04-33G: Making IZ truly affordable
March 3, 2016

Dear Chairman Hood & members of the Zoning Commission:

My name is Claire Jaffe. I grew up NW of the Rock Creek Park, and I now live in between U Street and Dupont Circle. I went to DC public schools, left the city for college and moved back because I care about this city and my community. I love living here and I am happy about new economic growth but I want to make sure that everyone who wants to can have a similar opportunity to live here and take advantage of the positive changes in the city. I am here today to voice my support for making Inclusionary Zoning more affordable so that low-income people and families can have better housing choices and greater geographic mobility throughout the District of Columbia.

As a native Washingtonian, I have watched the city change dramatically over my lifetime. I grew up in upper NW, moved across the park to 16th Street in middle school and moved to U street after high school. With each move, I watched as rents got higher and long time residents that we grew close to were forced to leave. Now, as a young person in the city, I am increasingly worried about the shrinking stock of affordable housing, especially in neighborhoods that have access to good public schools. I was lucky enough to grow up in bounds for Deal and Wilson and live within bus or walking distance of my after school job. Those opportunities propelled me to college and future success. Low-income DC residents and families are the people that are MOST in need of living close to jobs, amenities, and quality schools in order to provide the greatest opportunities for success.

I commend the DC Zoning Commission for creating Inclusionary Zoning, a nationally-known affordable housing policy. Now it is time to revisit our IZ program so that we are making the most of it. Right now, IZ is not creating units that provide the level of affordability to really help lower income residents. I ask the Zoning Commission specifically to:

- Make all rental IZ units affordable to people earning no more than 60% AMI level, as 80% AMI is clearly too high and is not currently serving the people most in need.
- Enable the city or qualified non-profits to purchase IZ units and then rent units to people at lower incomes.
- Keep IZ's current standards that make all affordable units permanently affordable
- Keep using IZ to build mixed income buildings and neighborhoods

Building on its strengths, and changing its shortcomings, IZ can make a much larger contribution to the severe housing challenges faced by our city. 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.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
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EXHIBIT NO. 187
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