

Testimony before the DC Zoning Commission
Regarding support for Zoning Case No. 04-33G
To make Inclusionary Zoning more affordable

By Peter Hartmann
January 28, 2016

Dear Chairman Anthony Hood & members of the Zoning Commission:

My name is Peter Hartmann. I was born and raised in the District of Columbia and currently live in Takoma DC. As someone who has lived here for almost all of my life, I am appalled at how the city has treated longtime District residents, especially those living in public housing and subsidized housing, and how the profit of developers has been prioritized over the human right of District citizens to have access to affordable housing. What we are looking at is a crisis.

We need a housing policy that allows people of all levels of income to live in the city, especially those residents whose families have lived in the District for generations. We need a housing policy that will allow people to celebrate and build upon the rich cultural history of the city and not one that continues to erase, displace, and criminalize the communities and culture of longtime District residents. We need to ask ourselves, what is a city if not the collective culture and progress of the people who are from here and who have been here for generations? Inclusionary zoning must be used to ensure that people who want to, can stay in the city, and more specifically in the neighborhoods and communities, in which they are from.

Although it has been painful to watch the city that I remember as a kid and grew up with slowly change and disappear, turning into a swarm of luxury condos, I have not been directly affected by housing policy, so I wanted to read an excerpt of demands made by the Black Youth Project and Black Lives Matter DMV regarding affordable housing in DC. I believe these demands must be taken seriously and responded to with appropriate legislation that grants dignity and respect to longtime District residents who wish to stay in the District. When I say "we" in this statement, it refers to the organizers at Black Lives Matter DMV and the Black Youth Project 100 DC, whose demands I support. There demands are as follows:

"We demand that the council refuse to provide any municipal services to federal buildings until the District is granted statehood while we live in a nation that refuses to grant the District statehood, thereby denying D.C. residents their right to congressional representation.

We demand quality housing for every person in DC, especially for low-income residents. Housing is a human right, not an opportunity to exploit and profit. We demand that the council stop the displacement of Black and low income residents by passing comprehensive housing reform, increasing yearly dedicated funding to the Housing Production Trust Fund and both unit and voucher based Local Rent Subsidy Programs. We demand the District rehabilitate every Public Housing Unit owned by the city and invest city resources into creating new Public Housing Projects with supportive services spread throughout all wards of the city. We demand the district must revamp inclusionary zoning to ensure that deeply affordable housing and public housing are consistently being built in every ward of the city by ensuring that the Office of Zoning has strong public oversight and accountability.

We demand that the city prioritize funding housing options across the continuum of housing for residents between 0%-30% area median incomes. We demand the council pass a tenant bill of rights that strengthens and expands rent control, strengthens language access to housing services, protects against and proactively tests for poor housing conditions including mold, bed bugs and other infestations and establishes harsher penalties for noncompliant landlords including, but not limited to, forfeiture of land for the establishment of limited equity cooperatives."

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Stachura". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.