

July 25, 2020

TO: DC Zoning Commission

FROM: John Stokes

RE: 19-21 DC Office of Planning Language

Hello Members of the Zoning Commission,

My name is John Stokes, a few of you may remember me and my communities ongoing battle to preserve the character, light, air, quality of life and home values in our neighborhood against Pop Ups, Pop Backs and irresponsible development. I previously submitted a letter on proposed changes to 14-11.

I am pleased that some protections remain in place since my last writing. However, I am wary of the special exceptions that would be provided to rules around the protection of architectural elements and solar energy systems. Literally hundreds of people and many years were spent developing rowhouse protections under 14-11. They are far too important to cast aside by adopting vague special exception standards. Many Zoning Commission members have already expressed concerns about these rules in earlier hearings.

What we may have all noticed is that "special exceptions" are mainly used when a developer wants to be go beyond what is normal, expected or beneficial to the community.

I urge the Zoning Commission to delay approving any changes to the rules that protect architectural elements and solar energy systems and direct the Office of Planning to undertake additional research.

I am not nor have ever been against development. It really should be responsible, sound development that is guided by sound science, research and common sense.

As many have also stated (and it makes common sense):

I support extending the protection of solar energy systems to R neighborhoods so that homeowners can elect to participate in Sustainable DC efforts.

I support allowing rooftop architectural elements to undergo ordinary repairs and/or replacement as long as the replacements are visually indistinguishable from the original elements.

I oppose proposed OP language that will allow construction to evade the ban on destroying architectural elements in all cases.

I oppose removing U-320.2 (i), (j) and (k) protections for adjoining landowners against the adverse effects of converting a residential building to an apartment building.

Thank you,

John Stokes