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District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ZC Case No. 21-18. Dance Loft Project

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge the Zoning Commission to approve the Dance Loft project. As someone who has dedicated much of my career to affordable housing, I have followed the community discussion around the Dance Loft project with great interest and have seen the Office of Planning set down report. As you are aware, the District is facing an affordable housing crisis that is both a humanitarian crisis as well as a severe obstacle to equitable growth and economic development. This is especially true in Ward 3 - where I live - and Ward 4. Both wards have a history of exclusionary zoning (racially motivated and otherwise) that has compounded these challenges. This project is a good start in trying to right a severe wrong.

The project's consistency with the Comp Plan and its recent amendments are exhaustively addressed in the Office of Planning set-down report. The report indicates that the proposed project conservatively fits within the zoning parameters of the Future Land Use Map, the Small Area Plan, and Comp Plan amendments.

Further, I cannot disagree more with the assertions of several adjacent neighbors in opposition to this project, who continue to maintain this building is out of place or too large. This is a 5-story building (plus setback penthouse level) along a major commercial corridor that scales back to a 4-story structure at the rear. The building is set back approximately 60-75 feet away from surrounding row homes, some of which are nearly equal in height to the proposed structure. The exaggerated narrative and images circulated by a small cadre of adjacent neighbors in opposition to the project must be challenged. A building of this scale would not be out of place in most DC neighborhoods. And this is especially true along a major commercial corridor such as 14th Street... and even more so in the context of an ongoing affordable housing crisis in our city.

I feel compelled to express my support for a Ward 4 project because we see this kind of opposition in Ward 3 as well. We must stop letting small - but vocal - groups of neighbors hijack these essential projects. Providing affordable housing, not to mention achieving retail and commercial vitality and preserving the arts in our city, requires increased density. This is especially true along commercial and transportation corridors, in neighborhoods with a history of exclusion, and where the zoning documents *themselves* call for such increased density.

We need projects like this in all Wards. The community benefits and amenities here are extraordinary. I urge support for this project without dilution of the already modest proposed density.

Sincerely,

Robin Halsband

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.21-18
EXHIBIT NO.210