

September 26, 2022

Greetings to the zoning board,

My understanding is that we had 48 hours since the hearing to submit written testimony. Because part of that time was over the weekend, I believe today is part of that 48 hours.

Further to my verbal testimony at the September 22 hearing I will share the following.

1. I live in NE Boundary, east of the river in Washington DC and have lived here since 2014
2. Since I moved here with our intergenerational family, I have listened to resident after resident, repeat the following theme. "The city and developers do whatever they want here and only give lip service to engaging the neighbors." Since I have been here I have witnessed the same and realize how humiliated and beaten down so many of these residents feel.
3. Engagement of neighbors needs to happen in ways that make sure our voices are heard before decisions are made. For example, the zoning has been changed in our area and very few if any people understood when that was going to happen, how it happened and how they could have participated in discussion. How can the race equity tool ensure that does not happen again and that full engagement becomes a reality?
4. One of many results of the zoning changes is that they are building numerous apartment buildings in a small area without ample parking and with very few community resources to support this many new people. My guesstimate from what I have heard from a developer is that over 125 units will be built in the next few years on a 2 or 3 block area. And this is just one area of our neighborhood. We are not equipped to handle that much growth. For example, our recreation center, which is considered by many to be wholly inadequate has no indoor gym. And no space for kids to recreate. The weight room is only available to older teens and is quite small and the computer learning center has only 3 computers. We have no grocery store, and few jobs. How does it make sense to build so many new apts., that will bring so many new residents to that environment and not have the infrastructure to serve them? Parents of this neighborhood complain constantly about what their children are exposed to with very few activities or outlets for them!!
5. Another point I would like to make is that the race equity tool needs to have a way to rebuild trust with communities like ours because at present the vast majority of residents feel like the city cares very little about their concerns. Mr. Hood said he did not want to hear stories of the past but without hearing those stories it is hard to adequately convey what changes need to be made to this tool in relationship to why there is so little trust. That said, I hope consideration will be given to personal visits to communities and neighbors to create a personal connection with the zoning board and for the purpose of rebuilding trust and a spirit of true engagement and collaboration.

I want to thank the Commission for its efforts to promote race equity.

Sincerely,

Tod Ewing

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