

January 10, 2024

Submission to the Zoning Commission  
Re: Case 23-02  
1617 U Street NW

To the Members of the Zoning Commission:

My name is Dan Winston. For two years I served as ANC Commissioner in Ward 1, near 14th and U. These days, I have another important role: dad. While I put my son to bed, I listened to Monday's hearing and waited to testify. I didn't hear anything about young families. Unfortunately, I can't make the rescheduled hearing, so I am submitting these comments in writing.

My wife, two young kids and I live 3 blocks from 1617 U Street. I hope my comments offers the perspective of many families like mine. We might not have the time to attend every hearing, but we're just as impacted – and so are our kids. I care deeply about this neighborhood, its past, present and most importantly its future.

And that's exactly why I so strongly support the proposed rezoning. Here we have a rare opportunity that's truly a win all around. We can improve facilities for public safety, increase affordable housing, and create the space for additional community benefits like a library. These are things that families – and everyone – need to thrive.

But let's be clear about the issue before us right now. We're just talking about the rezoning. There will be further conversation about what, exactly, should happen with this parcel. I welcome those conversations, and trust that the District will run a transparent process for the disposition and redevelopment of this public land. There are legal requirements that ensure this public land will include significant portions of affordable housing. Currently, of course, there isn't anyone living there at all.

The key point is this: in order for any improvement to this property, we need to zone it for more density. This, in fact, is exactly what's in the city's comprehensive plan in Policy MC-2.3.7 on the use of public sites. I'll quote directly: "Utilize public land at [...] the MPD 3rd District Headquarters to create mixed-use neighborhood landmarks that acknowledge and continue the history of U Street as a Black business corridor. Added density at these public sites should be used to create a significant amount of new affordable housing, establish space for cultural uses, and provide for additional public facilities, such as a new public library." The Comp Plan, in fact, provides specific guidance that addresses the concerns raised by those who oppose the rezoning: "New

construction should concentrate density towards U Street and use design strategies to visually reduce building height and bulk to provide appropriate transitions to adjacent lower density areas.”

The current facilities are inadequate. U Street needs more housing. I want my family to live in a neighborhood with updated facilities for fire and police. I'd love for my children to have a library nearby. The publicly-elected, representative local bodies all agree on this issue. I'm a member of the Dupont Circle Citizens Association, and I disagree with their motion of opposition. As the Office of the Attorney General pointed out, it's in line with the Comp Plan. To the Commission - I implore you: ignore the naysayers who take a pessimistic view of our city's future. Let's upzone this property, so we can ensure a bright future for our neighborhood, and our city.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'D', 'A', and 'W' in a cursive, stylized font. The 'D' and 'A' are connected, and the 'W' is separate to the right.

Dan Winston