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Subject: OZ Case 23-02 Letter in Opposition

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Zoning Testimony – Opposition – Case #23-02 – UPDATED – 2/11/24

As a result of having attended all hearings held regarding this zoning case since January 8, 2024, I am submitting this revised testimony in opposition to Zoning Case #23-02.

My name is Linda Watson. I reside at 1710 Seaton St NW, Washington, DC 20009. I am a homeowner and have lived at this address for over 45 years. I live within 200 feet of the site that would be affected by a zoning change that would allow the construction of an apartment building that could be larger than the current zoning regulations allow.

This is a stable and diverse neighborhood. The diversity has many facets which include race, age, singles and families. I am a person of color. I have invested in this neighborhood and would like to continue to enjoy my investment now that I am retiring. I am concerned that changes to the zoning regulations will negatively impact this community as follows:

- This neighborhood has been recently affected by multiple infrastructure projects which have taken away our limited parking spaces to accommodate construction vehicles. These were short-duration projects. Changing the zoning regulations would allow the construction of a high-rise building which would take months to complete and create a significant disturbance to the area, including the possibility of damage resulting from the excavation process. The increase of noise levels will be disruptive and will be an intrusion on the business day of the increasing population of people who now work from home.
- Seaton St is a narrow street that is only one block long and is one-way, west to east, from Florida Ave to 17th St. There has already been an increase in vehicular through-traffic (including large trucks) on Seaton St that appears to be attributed to drivers that are trying to turn left onto U St (since there is no left turn allowed at Florida Ave and U St). I believe that this traffic will only increase with the addition of high-rise apartment residents and their guests. Also, the recent addition of speed bumps has resulted in additional noise levels as vehicles clear the speed bumps.
- Seaton St has also seen increased noisy, pedestrian traffic on the weekends as the night-life in Adams Morgan is winding down and people are making their way home. I believe that this traffic will also increase with the addition of high-rise apartment residents and their guests.
- Relocation, either temporarily or permanently, of the police and fire stations is a public safety issue and could result in increased crime at a time when crime rates are already escalating in our city.

I am not against change, but I am against destroying the landscape of my neighborhood by creating a structure that would obscure views, block sunlight and create more traffic and noise.

As I have listened to the testimony given during the zoning meetings that I have attended, it appears that the DC government believes that more housing is needed in our city. If that is the case and, if additional housing is so important, it would seem that SOME additional housing would be better than NO additional housing. In that regard, and with all due respect, in my opinion an obvious compromise would be to create new housing within the current zoning regulations. Another alternative that also deserves consideration would be to re-purpose some of the vacant downtown properties.

If the zoning regulations are changed the changes may not result in an immediate construction frenzy, but the door to move forward at some future date will be wide open.

Your consideration in this matter is appreciated.