

2105 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Monday, February 8, 2024

Dr. Amber A. Hewitt, Chief Equity Officer and Director  
Mayor's Office of Racial Equity

Dear Dr. Hewitt,

I write regarding the matter of racial equity. I serve as the representative of a party to a case now before the DC Zoning Commission, Case 23-02. The party I represent is Black Neighbors of 1617 U. Street NW, public land that the Office of Planning (OP) is recommending be upzoned from MU4 to MU10 for private development. We are one of several parties in opposition to that recommendation. We'd like your help in helping the Zoning Commission make a fully informed, fair decision.

Our concern is that OP did very little outreach, if any, to affected Black residents, businesses, churches, community groups, and civic associations prior to making its recommendation. Its failure to do so is contrary to stated city policy as written in the DC Racial Equity Tool: <https://dcoz.dc.gov/featured-content/zc-racial-equity-analysis-tool-new>

During its staff's testimony before the Zoning Commission, OP's lack of community engagement became so apparent that, at one point, Commission Chairman Anthony Hood declared that he was ready to postpone the hearings "... until this engagement is tightened up." However, despite his clearly wanting racial equity to mean something -- starting with engagement with Black neighbors -- he was convinced by other Commission members to continue the hearing in spite of the equity outreach failure. His statement at that hearing is here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/xr-8mUtfKko?si=DA1RIjtz7P0DR30-&t=7267>

This matter has reached a heightened point of contention. On behalf of Black Neighbors of 1617 U. Street NW, I ask that you submit a letter asking the Zoning Commission to postpone any further deliberations until the DC Office of Planning engages in a much more robust community outreach effort that fulfills the equity intentions in the DC Racial Equity Tool. Your looking into this would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Gregory Adams, Representative  
Black Neighbors of 1617 U. Street NW  
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