

GOVERNMENT OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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ZONING COMMISSION

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REGULAR PUBLIC HEARING

+ + + + +

THURSDAY

MAY 22, 2025

+ + + + +

The Public Hearing of the District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment convened via teleconference, pursuant to notice at 4:00 p.m. EDT, Anthony J. Hood, Chairperson, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

ANTHONY J. HOOD, Chairperson
ROBERT E. MILLER, Vice Chairperson
JOSEPH IMAMURA, Commissioner
TAMMY STIDHAM, Commissioner
GWEN WRIGHT, Commissioner

ZONING COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

SHARON S. SCHELLIN, Secretary
PAUL YOUNG, A/V Specialist

OFFICE OF ZONING LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

JACOB RITTING, Esquire

The transcript constitutes the minutes from the Regular Public Hearing held on May 22, 2025.

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Case No. 24-16

(MR 1401 15th Street Retail, LLC

Map Amendment at Square 210, Lot 827

1401 - 1405 15th Street, Northwest..... 6

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(4:00 p.m.)

CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We are convening and broadcasting this public hearing by video conferencing. My name is Anthony Hood and I am joined by Vice Chair Miller, Commissioner Imamura, Commissioner Stidham and soon to be joined by, Ms. Schellin, is Gwen joining us? Okay. I can't hear you.

MS. SCHELLIN: I believe she is.

CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

MS. SCHELLIN: I don't have her marked down but I'm going to check.

CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Well, possibly soon to be joined by Commissioner Wright. We are also joined by the Office of Zoning Staff Ms. Sharon Schellin and Mr. Paul Young. Our Office of Zoning Legal Division Mr. Jacob Ritting. I will ask all others to introduce themselves at the appropriate time.

A virtual public hearing notice is available on the Office of Zoning's website. Here she is. This proceeding is being recorded by a court reporter and is also webcast live via Webex and YouTube Live. The video will be available on the Office of Zoning's website after the hearing. Accordingly, all those listening on Webex or by phone will be muted during the hearing. Only those who have signed up to testify will be unmuted at the appropriate time.

1 When called, please state your name before providing
2 your testimony. When you are finished speaking please mute your
3 audio. If you experience difficulty accessing Webex or with your
4 telephone call-in, then please call our OZ hotline number at 202-
5 727-0789 to receive Webex login or call-in instructions or if you
6 have not signed up to testify. All persons planning to testify
7 must have signed up in advance and will be called by name at the
8 appropriate time. At the time of sign-up, all participants will
9 complete the oath or affirmation required by Subtitle Z-408.7.
10 If you wish to file written testimony or additional supporting
11 documents during the hearing, then please be prepared to describe
12 and discuss it at the time of your request when submitted.

13 The subject of this evening's hearing is Zoning
14 Commission Case No. 24-16. It's MR 1401 15th Street Retail, LLC
15 Zoning Map Amendment at Square 210, Lot 827, and again today's
16 date is May 22nd, 2025.

17 The hearing will be conducted in accordance with
18 provisions of 11 D.C.M.R. Chapter 4 as follows; preliminary
19 matters, Applicant's case -- I think the Applicant has requested
20 15 to 20 minutes -- report of Office of Planning and Department
21 of Transportation and report of other government agencies. I
22 need to squish that around in my announcement because we have the
23 report of other government agencies first. We have the report
24 of the Department of Transportation, if we have DOT and their
25 particular presiding, and then we also need to have the, then

1 we'll have the report of the Office of Planning, and all that
2 was off the cuff. Okay. Report of the ANC, and in this case we
3 have two ANCs, ANC 2B and 2F and then we'll have testimony of
4 organizations and individuals, each with five and three minutes
5 respectively, organizations five minutes, individuals three
6 minutes respectively and we'll hear in order from those who are
7 in support, opposition or undeclared. Then we'll have rebuttal
8 and closing by the Applicant.

9 At this time, the Commission will consider any
10 preliminary matters. Ms. Schellin, are there any preliminary
11 matters?

12 MS. SCHELLIN: So just briefly. There's I know one
13 expert witness that's been previously submitted and approved by
14 the Commission, Brandice Elliott, and planning the Commission
15 would just accept her in this case.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Any objections to continuing that
17 status? No objections. We'll continue that status.

18 MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. And so as you stated, the
19 Applicant plans to take about 15/20 minutes addressing any issues
20 and concerns from government agencies and the public. As far as
21 reports I don't believe 2B submitted a report although I will
22 check and see if one came in lately. 2F submitted a report in
23 support four to zero to zero at Exhibit 16E as in Edward, and
24 then you have the OP setdown report followed up by their hearing
25 report at Exhibit 28 in support recommending that the Commission

1 approve the case. DDOT submitted their report at Exhibit 27 with
2 no objection. Other government agencies Exhibit 3D as in David,
3 the Historic Preservation Review Board submitted a report for
4 your review. And with that I'm going to turn it over to the
5 Commission to move forward. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Ms. Schellin.

7 Mr. Young and everyone, can we bring up Petitioners and
8 then what I'm going to do, colleagues, when they finish giving
9 us their presentation I'm going to ask Commissioner Wright to go
10 first and Commissioner Imamura, and then we'll go Commissioner
11 Stidham, Vice Chair Miller and then myself.

12 All right. So, Ms. Bloomfield, whenever you're ready.
13 Take your time. Whenever you're ready.

14 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Hi. Can you see me?

15 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: No. I can't see you, I saw you
16 yesterday but no, I can't see you today.

17 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Oh. I'm going to try to work on this
18 but I'm so sorry. I can see me. Is that working?

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Not yet.

20 MS. BLOOMFIELD: I'm not sure how important this is but
21 I'd like to get on camera. Let me do my opening and I will work
22 on getting on camera once I hand it over to the rest of our team.
23 Is that okay with everyone? I apologize.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: That's fine. No problem.

25 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Okay. Can we just do quick

1 introductions for the record. I'm Jessica Bloomfield with the
2 law firm of Holland & Knight. I'm here with Brandice Elliott,
3 also from Holland & Knight and then I'll turn it over to the
4 Applicant to introduce themselves, please. And you're muted
5 right now.

6 MR. DARBY: Michael Darby, founder of Monument Realty,
7 along with.

8 MR. KELLEY: Lewis Kelley, director of Acquisitions at
9 Monument.

10 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you. So, Mr. Young, if you can
11 bring up our PowerPoint presentation, please. Thank you.

12 So good afternoon, Commissioners. Again, Jessica
13 Bloomfield with the law firm of Holland & Knight. We are here
14 this evening seeking a zoning map amendment for property located
15 at 1401 to 1405 15th Street, Northwest. If you go to the first
16 slide, or the next slide.

17 You can see on the map the property is located on the
18 east side of 15th Street, just south of P Street in the Logan
19 Circle neighborhood. The property is currently zoned RA-5 and
20 this application requests approval to re-zone the property to
21 ARTS-3 which would extend the existing ARTS-3 designation that
22 abuts the property immediately to the north and east.

23 As you'll see on the next slide in just a minute, the
24 property is currently improved with the Grace Reformed Church and
25 Sunday School and Carriage House. These buildings are

1 collectively designated as a historic landmark in the D.C.
2 Inventory of Historic Sites and are listed in the National
3 Register of Historic Places. When the 14th Street historic
4 district was established in 1994, the buildings were identified
5 as contributing buildings to the historic district as well. As
6 a result we've met with staff from the Historic Preservation
7 Office and have confirmed that the landmark status of these
8 existing structures will preclude any material modification to
9 the exterior of the buildings.

10 As you will hear in our presentation the application
11 fully meets the legal standard of review for a zoning map
12 amendment. The proposed ARTS-3 zone is not inconsistent with the
13 comprehensive plan future land use map's designation as mixed use
14 medium density residential and moderate density commercial and
15 is not inconsistent with the generalized policy map designations
16 as a neighborhood conservation area and within a Main Street
17 mixed use corridor. The map amendment is also not inconsistent
18 with a number of the written policies within the city-wide
19 elements and within the near Northwest area element of the comp
20 plan.

21 The map amendment as you'll hear will advance the goals
22 of the Logan Circle investment plan as well and will facilitate
23 progress towards achieving racial equity by fostering an
24 inclusive city preserving historic structures and allowing for
25 an expanded number of neighborhood serving and community oriented

1 uses. As Ms. Schellin mentioned, we are pleased to have support
2 for this application from the Office of Planning, DDOT and the
3 affected ANC 2F which voted unanimously to support the
4 application. We worked closely with the community on our goals
5 for the property and we are grateful for their support thus far.

6 In a minute I'm going to turn it over to Lewis Kelley
7 of Monument Realty to provide some specific testimony on the
8 history of the property, the Applicant's recent purchase of it
9 and its goals for potential future redevelopment and activation.
10 We will also have Brandice Elliott provide a detailed account of
11 how the application is not inconsistent with the comprehensive
12 plan using the Commission's racial equity tool as a guide.

13 Before I do that, I want to quickly address the
14 opposition letters that have been filed in the case record over
15 the past couple of days. In our view, all of these letters make
16 the same general point that there is opposition against any sort
17 of demolition of the existing structures.

18 We want to be clear that the purpose of the zoning map
19 amendment is to allow for greater flexibility in the types of
20 uses that could potentially be permitted to occupy the interior
21 of these currently vacant buildings. Doing so would allow for
22 limited commercial uses that are not currently allowed under the
23 RA-5 zone which would fulfill the District's goals of creating
24 areas with access to opportunities, services, and amenities for
25 District residents and for re-using existing structures in a

1 sustainable and productive manner.

2 I would also note that the opposition letters appear
3 to be conflating two issues, zoning, which is governed by the
4 Zoning Enabling Act, and historic preservation, which is governed
5 by the Historic Preservation Act. Whether the buildings are
6 historic or not has no bearing on what the appropriate zone
7 designation is for this property. In reviewing zoning map
8 amendment, the Commission is required to make the decision based
9 on whether the proposed zone is not inconsistent with the
10 comprehensive plan. Our presentation today explains how this
11 application falls squarely within this legal standard.
12 Separately, any alteration to the historic structures will be
13 subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation
14 Review Board.

15 The Zoning Commission is authorized to determine what
16 the appropriate zone is for this property, whereas HPRB will
17 determine whether any potential future alterations are
18 appropriate for the historic structures. To that point, I would
19 also reiterate that in this case the ARTS-3 zone is not
20 inconsistent with the comp plan or with other adopted public
21 policies and active programs related to the property,
22 particularly when analyzed through a racial equity lens.

23 I will now turn it over to Mr. Lewis, I'm sorry, Mr.
24 Lewis Kelley and Michael Darby and then they will turn it over
25 to Brandice Elliott, and I'm going to try to get my video working.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Jessica.

3 Again, my name is Lewis Kelley with Monument Realty.
4 I'm joined by Michae Darby, the founder of Monument. Monument
5 is a full service real estate firm located here in the District
6 with a 26 year history. Monument and members of our team have
7 been involved with multiple historic renovations including the
8 Willard Hotel, the Southern Railway building, the Watergate
9 Hotel, the Victor building and most recently a collection of
10 historic row homes and commercial structures in the Gallery Place
11 Chinatown neighborhood.

12 Monument is the developer on behalf of an entity that
13 purchased the property from the Central Atlantic Conference of
14 the United Church of Christ in April, 2025. The property has
15 been vacant for several years. The seller ended its services in
16 2019 due to declining congregation members and increase in
17 capital improvements cost. The seller had leased the space to
18 other congregations between 2019 and 2022 but it has been vacant
19 since 2022.

20 The building is in poor condition and the vacancy has
21 caused issues for the neighborhood over the years with vagrancy
22 on the property, amongst other issues. The decision to sell the
23 property was motivated by the capital required to renovate and
24 maintain the property which had become insurmountable. After
25 unsuccessful attempts to sell the property to another church

1 organization, the seller engaged a third party brokerage firm to
2 market the property for sale. We understand that there was
3 another church that held up the seller for a long period of time
4 and was never able to close, and we got involved in the pursuit
5 of the property after this point in time. The seller was aware
6 of our intended use for the property and worked with us to advance
7 the map amendment application prior to our acquisition of the
8 property.

9 We're excited about the opportunity to restore this
10 property and turn it into a space that can once again be enjoyed
11 by the community. While the requested map amendment does not
12 prescribe a particular use or preclude religious use, we feel it
13 is important to highlight our intended use for the property given
14 the historic nature of the property and questions that may arise,
15 particularly given letters filed in the record that raise
16 concerns about the viability of maintaining the historic
17 structure.

18 The property lends itself well for adaptive re-use as
19 a restaurant establishment which is our intended use for the
20 property. The requested map amendment change will allow us to
21 preserve the historic building with a use that is compatible with
22 both the existing structure, the comprehensive plan and the
23 surrounding mix of uses in the neighborhood.

24 The other by-right use that is allowed here is
25 residential but this would be much more impactful to the interior

1 finishes whereas our plan is to restore the interior finishes
2 with minimal changes to the layout of the space and maintain and
3 preserve the exterior of the building entirely. Again, this
4 would be possible because our intended use is compatible with the
5 current space. So candidly, residential use, again, allowed by-
6 right would result in significant renovations and destruction of
7 the interior of the building while commercial use would not.

8 Given the historic nature of the property, we met with
9 Steve Callcott at HPO before commencing the map amendment process
10 to discuss our plans for the property and historic structure.
11 During this meeting, Steve confirmed that the historic
12 designation only applies to the exterior and structural
13 assemblies and does not cover the interior finishes or space
14 layouts. He was familiar with the property given that other
15 prospective purchasers had reached out to HPO including those
16 that wished to redevelop the property into residential use.
17 Although interior use does not fall under HPO's purview, changing
18 the property to residential use would substantially impact the
19 interior of the property. He believed commercial use in our plan
20 in particular was the best way to preserve the property, both
21 inside and out understanding it is likely to fall into further
22 disrepair otherwise.

23 To be clear, we have no intention of demolishing any
24 portion of the exterior of the historic structure. The building's
25 historic designation precludes us from doing so. The purpose of

1 the zoning map amendment is to expand the type of uses that could
2 be operated within the historic structure so that the building
3 can be put into productive use and enjoyed by the community once
4 again.

5 Furthermore, we engaged the ANC at the beginning of the
6 map amendment process to ensure our plan would have the support
7 of the neighborhood. We met with several members of the ANC
8 including Dr. Helen Kramer, Chair of the ANC 2F's Community
9 Development Committee or CDC, and Single Member District
10 Representative and Chairman Joe Florio. On separate occasions
11 we toured them through the property and showed them our conceptual
12 plans. We later presented our application to the full CDC at
13 its September 25th, 2024 public meeting at which the CDC was
14 supportive of our application and on October 2nd, 2024 at which
15 a quorum of Commissioners was present, ANC 2F voted unanimously
16 to support our application.

17 We're excited about the opportunity to preserve the
18 property, one that has sat vacant for years and fallen into
19 disrepair. The zoning map amendment is not only consistent with
20 the comprehensive plan but it is the best and most realistic path
21 forward to preserve the property and activate the space with a
22 compatible use that can be enjoyed by the community and improve
23 the surrounding public spaces.

24 I appreciate everybody's time and I will now turn it
25 over to Brandice Elliott.

1 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Just quickly before you do. We should
2 have asked Mr. Young to switch to the next slide as Mr. Kelley
3 was speaking just so that you can get, and this is all in the
4 case record as well, but just so that you all can get a flavor
5 of what the existing conditions of the property look like and
6 what those historic buildings are.

7 Thank you. Brandice?

8 MS. ELLIOTT: So good evening, Chair Hood and members
9 of the Commission. It's always wonderful to see you all. My
10 name is Brandice Elliott and I'll be providing the comprehensive
11 plan and racial equity analysis for this case.

12 So since we've already covered the first couple of
13 slides and hopefully you all understand the context, we'll go
14 ahead and go to the next slide, please.

15 So the zoning regulations require that a map amendment
16 not be inconsistent with the intent of the comprehensive plan,
17 the future land use map, the generalized policy map and other
18 policy programs related to the property and so this is what the
19 bulk of our presentation is going to address. I know that the
20 Zoning Commission is aware of that but it looks like we have a
21 lot of people attending this and so I wanted to make sure that
22 they benefit from understanding the standard of review. Next
23 slide, please.

24 The future land use map designation for the property
25 is both medium density residential and moderate density

1 commercial. So the medium density areas, those are generally
2 meant for mid-rise apartments. They may include some taller
3 buildings, especially if inclusionary zoning is included and
4 you'll typically see a density here between 1.8 and 4.0 FAR. The
5 moderate density commercial is a step up from this. These are
6 areas that support a mix of retail, office and service uses and
7 generally have a density of between 2.5 and 4.0 FAR and, again,
8 potentially higher if they include IZ.

9 So we're proposing the ARTS-3 zone which is not
10 inconsistent with these designations. It allows up to 4.0 FAR
11 or 4.8 FAR with IZ and it supports 2.5 FAR of non-residential
12 use. So as you can see, the proposed zone fits well with what
13 the future land use map envisions and encourages more of a mixed
14 use development character in this area. Next slide, please.

15 So the generalized policy map designates the property
16 as neighborhood conservation and Main Street mixed use corridors.
17 Now, our original analysis focused on the neighborhood
18 conservation area designation but during its review the Office
19 of Planning pointed out that the site also falls within the Main
20 Street mixed use corridor and just that small strip across the
21 north is what falls into the Main Street mixed use corridor and
22 so the neighborhood, so we want to be able to briefly address
23 that here. Sorry for that.

24 A neighborhood conservation area is a place where
25 growth is expected to be modest with a focus on in-fill and

1 maintaining neighborhood character. But it still allows
2 development, particularly development that meets housing needs.
3 The Main Street mixed use corridor is a pedestrian oriented
4 commercial area that supports retail and services. It encourage
5 reinvestment and it promotes walkability and transit access. So
6 the proposed ARTS-3 zone is not inconsistent with either of these
7 designations. It supports the preservation of the neighborhood
8 character, the adaptive re-use of buildings. It encourages
9 neighborhood serving uses and helps enhance the pedestrian and
10 transit experience. Next slide, please.

11 Mr. Young, next slide, please.

12 Well, the next slide provides a comparison of the two
13 zones. So the existing RA-5 zone compared to the ARTS-3 zone,
14 and what you can see in that is that the RA-5 zone allows for
15 more height and density overall with up to 90 feet of height and
16 6.0 residential FAR. If we can --

17 MS. BLOOMFIELD: The PowerPoint presentation is at
18 Exhibit 36 if the Commissioners want to pull it up. I'm not sure
19 what the technical difficulty is. There we go. Thank you.

20 MS. ELLIOTT: Much easier to visualize it because, you
21 know, the numbers, they're easier to see here. All right.

22 In contrast, the ARTS-3 allows a height of 65 feet
23 matter-of-right, a little bit higher with IZ and then a density
24 of up to 4.8 FAR with IZ. So there's also a cap on non-residential
25 FAR at 2.5 which is what's important in this case. So overall

1 the ARTS-3 zone is more modest in scale but it does offer more
2 flexibility for non-residential uses and it aligns better with
3 the mixed use walkable character that exists along 15th Street
4 and it would be supported by the proposed map amendment. Next
5 slide, please.

6 All right. We're going to get into the racial equity
7 analysis. I think that would be easier if you all could see some
8 of the language. There we go. We'll go ahead and go into part
9 1 with the comprehensive plan. Thank you, Mr. Young. Next slide,
10 please.

11 So the next slide, when we get there, it shows all of
12 the policies that we identified in our application that would be
13 advanced by the proposed map amendment. So as you can see, we've
14 got a number on there. That's okay, you can stay here. I'll be
15 there shortly. So the comprehensive plan policies, they're drawn
16 from a range of elements that include land use, housing,
17 transportation, and more and they show how the proposed map
18 amendment is going to align with District-wide planning goals.
19 There are also a number that are included in OP's Racial Equity
20 Crosswalk that, in particular, will advance racial equity. So,
21 again, that analysis is provided in our application.

22 And so here the Logan Circle investment plan was
23 developed by the Office of Planning back in 2008 to guide
24 revitalization in emerging and distressed neighborhoods and, as
25 you can see, that little star on the map designates where the

1 property is within this study area. Now, even though the plan
2 didn't make specific recommendations for this property, its
3 overall goals still apply and have been used to guide planning
4 and zoning decisions in the area.

5 So some of the few ways in which this map amendment
6 would advance these goals is in things like neighborhood oriented
7 retail with the provision of local shops and cafes. Also by
8 supporting cultural revitalization and creating community
9 gathering spaces, and finally it would enhance the public realm
10 by encouraging pedestrian activity which brings safety, vibrancy
11 and can lead to more investment in things like streetscapes and
12 outdoor spaces that are appreciated by pedestrians. Next slide,
13 please.

14 The next slide, there we go. I'm sorry, Mr. Young. I
15 really appreciate you flipping through these for me. Thank you.

16 This slide gives some context of the Logan Circle
17 neighborhood and some of the things that we have considered from
18 a community guidance and engagement standpoint. Logan Circle is
19 one of the city's most historic areas and it has strong ties to
20 D.C.'s heritage and vibrant arts and culture scene. There's been
21 a lot of economic revitalization here, especially along 14th
22 Street with growth and restaurant, shops and creative businesses.
23 Public space improvements like bike lanes which we see here on
24 15th Street, and wider sidewalks have made the area more walkable
25 and housing and affordable housing preservation efforts have

1 | allowed long time residents to stay in the neighborhood. Of
2 | course any new development can come with short term impacts,
3 | things like noise or traffic. There are some resources, some
4 | District resources to help offset some of the long term costs.
5 | On the flip side, this proposed map amendment brings a lot of
6 | potential benefits, for instance, cleaning up a vacant site in a
7 | neighborhood serving retail or dining, improving pedestrian
8 | safety and bringing new amenities close to transit. It also
9 | supports job creation and historic preservation efforts. Next
10 | slide, please.

11 | On the next slide we're going to talk about the legacy
12 | of discrimination in Logan Circle and historically, this
13 | neighborhood, like many of the others in D.C., was shaped by
14 | redlining, discriminatory Federal policies and urban renewal.
15 | These are projects that often harmed Black communities. Long
16 | time residents faced barriers to education, housing and jobs and
17 | many were displaced by rising costs and infrastructure neglect.

18 | So recently the District has taken several steps to
19 | advance racial equity as a whole. However, locally Logan Circle
20 | has benefited from some equity focus initiatives like
21 | inclusionary zoning and affordable housing trust funds. There's
22 | also been an emphasis on cultural preservation and improving the
23 | public realm to create a more inclusive and connected
24 | neighborhood. Next slide, please.

25 | The next slide shows a timeline of our community

1 engagement and so as you can see the engagement began last summer
2 in June and has continued throughout this time period. There is
3 approval, I'm sorry. ANC 2F did vote unanimously to support the
4 map amendment and that is included at Exhibit 12 in the record
5 and you can see that there have also been several meetings with
6 the Office of Planning as well as some members of the ANC. Next
7 slide, please.

8 The Office of Planning is charged with the task of
9 providing disaggregated data and these are some of the statistics
10 that they identified in their report, and so I'm just going to
11 summarize a couple of them. There have been some population
12 shifts over the past decade in the near Northwest planning area,
13 which is actually larger than just Logan Circle, where both Black
14 and White populations have declined. But there have been
15 increases in the Asian, Hispanic and multi-racial group
16 populations.

17 The median income has risen by about 25,000 although
18 that's still lower than the city-wide increase and still Black
19 residents have had the lowest incomes and some of the slowest
20 income growth. So the area's poverty rate is lower than the city
21 average but clearly there are still some disparities between
22 races. And on a positive note, unemployment dropped
23 significantly well below the city-wide average and the lower cost
24 burden suggests there's more economic stability in this area
25 compared to the rest of the District. Next slide, please.

1 So the idea of the Housing Equity Report is that, you
2 know, affordable housing is distributed more equally across all
3 parts of the District and it's not just concentrated in a few
4 areas. For this particular planning area, the goal is to produce
5 1,250 affordable units out of a total of 1,850 units overall and
6 as of January, 2025 we've only hit about one third of that
7 affordable target which is about 418 units. While this
8 development has the potential to provide residential in the
9 Parish House, it's not significant and OP is not recommending
10 that the map amendment be subject to IZ plus, and we're going to
11 discuss that on the next slide.

12 So IZ Plus is actually meant to kick in when a map
13 amendment results in a higher density than what's allowed under
14 the current zoning. But here the existing RA-5 zone already
15 allows a 6.0 FAR or 7.2 with IZ. The proposed ARTS-3 zone allows
16 less, 4.0 FAR or 4.8 with IZ. So there's no increase in the
17 density. In fact, the percent change would be negative. So
18 applying IZ Plus would raise the affordable housing requirement
19 without actually increasing the development potential which is
20 not the intent of the policy, and just to note the landmark status
21 of the property already limits what can be done. It restricts
22 the size to its current building envelope so there can't be any
23 expansion to increase, you know, building potential. Next slide,
24 please.

25 So here is where the racial equity analysis pulls

1 everything together. So in this table we identify how it advances
2 racial equity. So on direct displacement there's no impact here
3 because the property is currently vacant and there are no
4 residents living on site. For indirect displacement, the new
5 retail and dining uses could actually strengthen the neighborhood
6 economy and benefit adjacent areas. In terms of housing, the
7 amendment would help support new housing options in the Parish
8 House and it would make the area more attractive to live in.
9 More supply in the long term can also help reduce overall housing
10 costs.

11 Looking at the physical environment, the site is in a
12 transit rich area and it's close to two metro stations and served
13 by multiple bus lines. There's a chance for streetscape
14 improvements, better pedestrian safety and green infrastructure
15 upgrades as part of future improvements to the property and this
16 location is near everything, jobs, schools, parks, libraries, and
17 so it supports equitable access. Next slide, please.

18 So on the left here you see a few areas of potential
19 inconsistencies with the proposed map amendment, things like net
20 zero energy targets or the goal of maximizing green
21 infrastructure. But when we take a step back and look at the
22 full policy picture, these concerns are outweighed by the future
23 land use map, the generalized policy map and a broad range of
24 supportive policies across all of the comp plan elements. So
25 from housing and land use to environmental protection, economic

1 development and more. So while we acknowledge that there is some
2 inconsistencies here, the proposal aligns strongly with the
3 overall direction of the comp plan. Next slide, please.

4 And so here just wrapping things up. The map amendment
5 is not inconsistent with the comprehensive plan especially when
6 we view it through a racial equity lens. We have already
7 identified those policies that might raise some questions but
8 they're clearly outweighed by broader priorities in the
9 comprehensive plan.

10 And so overall the proposal supports the District's
11 goals for equity revitalization and inclusive growth, and that
12 concludes my presentation, and I will hand it back to Ms.
13 Bloomfield.

14 Thank you.

15 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you so much. That was wonderful.

16 Mr. Young, if you go to the next slide which I think
17 is our last, I will just simply reiterate the support we have
18 for this application from the Office of Planning, from DDOT and
19 from ANC 2F which is the ANC in which we are located. The ANC,
20 which was mentioned earlier, I believe it was 2B, is located
21 directly across the street from us. They did not engage. We've
22 outreached to them. We sent them copies of all of the filings,
23 et cetera, but we did not get any formal support or opposition
24 or anything from that ANC, in case that question comes up later.

25 So I would just note that we're very pleased to have

1 support from so many different entities and we've worked so
2 closely with the community, and we will end there and take your
3 questions.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Ms. Bloomfield, and to
6 the team. We appreciate the presentation. Let's see if we have
7 any questions or comments.

8 Commissioner Wright?

9 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you for a very thorough
10 presentation.

11 I think that on the issue of is this an appropriate
12 zone for this piece of land, I do not have any disagreement that
13 the zone is appropriate and I don't disagree about not doing IZ
14 Plus. I think that, you know, understanding the limitations of
15 the actual ability to alter the building makes IZ Plus moot and
16 I, you know, I feel comfortable with all of that. However, I do
17 want to ask a few questions. Mr. Kelley, and I appreciated him
18 bringing up all of the, you know, background about the history
19 of the building and I just have a few questions.

20 First, the only letter that was able to find in the
21 record from Historic District Review Board staff was a letter
22 from 2022, I believe, from Steve Callcott that had to do with
23 the subdivision of the property and, you know, it did lay out
24 and clearly stated that the property is a historic site and, you
25 know, the review of any exterior changes would have to be approved

1 | by the Historic District Review Board and so on. I guess one
2 | question is, have you talked to Mr. Callcott or someone else from
3 | the Historic Preservation staff more recently about this map
4 | amendment?

5 | MR. KELLEY: Yes. What you're referencing was a prior
6 | group that preserved, pursued the property in 2022. Michael and
7 | I had a zoom meeting with Steve Callcott last summer where we
8 | walked him through our plans for the property and just to confirm
9 | his interpretation of the historic designation and that it only
10 | applies to the exterior and not the interior of the property and
11 | walked him through our plans, our conceptual plans I should say.

12 | COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Great. One thing I know that the
13 | District of Columbia does allow nominations for interiors to be
14 | designated as historic. It's very rare but it does happen and
15 | are you or anyone on your team aware of any community group or
16 | individual proposing a nomination for the interior of this
17 | historic site?

18 | MR. KELLEY: No, we're not.

19 | COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Okay. You know, I have worked
20 | in historic preservation for many, many years. I absolutely have
21 | seen wonderful adaptive re-uses of religious buildings. You
22 | know, I understand in this case it is a challenge because the
23 | change in use will inevitably require changes to the interior.
24 | I'm sure you'll do them very sensitively and so I really do
25 | understand the folks who've written in. I understand their

1 concerns. This is a very, very special and important building.

2 One thing, well, sort of two more questions. One is
3 in one of the letters we've received there is some sort of comment
4 about a religious organization or congregation who was interested
5 in negotiating to move into the building and use it as a church.
6 I know that seemed to be the case in 2022 in the letter that we
7 had from Mr. Callcott. That seemed to have fallen through in
8 2022. Is there a more recent congregation that has expressed an
9 interest in the building?

10 MR. DARBY: This is Michael Darby. We understand that
11 it was the same group attempting to stay in the game with the
12 hope of trying to buy. We don't know anything about the financial
13 ability to buy. We do know that there was a process run through
14 the brokerage group on behalf of the current owners, or the
15 previous church owners, prior to us and that process was such
16 that we were the group chosen to purchase the building and we
17 were told it was because of our ability to move forward and close
18 on the deal. So, from that, and we don't know the exact details,
19 but from that we understood that the group that was still trying
20 to buy didn't have the wherewithal or could match the terms and
21 conditions of the purchase that we proffered to the existing
22 church.

23 I think the point was that if it could have been a
24 church it would have most likely been a church, but the amount
25 of time the building was on the market there was a period of time

1 that the church who did have it under contract extended the
2 contract multiple times and we understood from the seller that,
3 or the group that we bought the church from, that it actually
4 helped to put the church into a state of disrepair because things
5 weren't moving forward and the church was vacant, so they were
6 eager to get the church sold to a group that could then move
7 forward quickly to maintain it, to not let it deteriorate any
8 further and to move forward in a way that the use would be a use
9 that could pay for the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the
10 building.

11 And I do want to say as someone who's been involved in
12 a lot of first class historic preservations in my career that
13 this is an exciting one for us. I think one of the letters
14 mentions the interior of the building and we don't have a project
15 yet obviously until you approve it but as I see that building
16 I'm very excited to maintain all the beautiful woodwork in the
17 interior. Most of the significant items that would be seen as
18 significant, to preserve the history of that building in relation
19 to a former president being part of the congregation in a way to
20 highlight that, we think that's very positive especially for a
21 city like Washington that we have a lot of visitors come through
22 and would love visitors to come to that building and enjoy being
23 a part of that building and sit in that building that is so
24 historic.

25 So we will spend a lot of time making sure that we

1 connect with the history. Actually we see very little done to
2 the main historic areas, the chapel area we call it and the Sunday
3 School area. The other area is the kitchen area and the function
4 areas that are really not historic (audio interference) and those
5 we're going to fit our utility areas into to minimize any damage
6 to the fabric of the history that we see in the church.

7 So we're very excited about bringing something to the
8 market that will enhance, it will restore the beauty of that
9 building.

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: That is a great response and is
11 definitely the kind of thing I was hoping to hear that, as you're
12 looking at changes that you will consider some historic
13 interpretation on the interior of what was important about the
14 history of the building and its connections with Theodore
15 Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower and others.

16 So I think that was my last question. Thank you for
17 your presentation.

18 MR. DARBY: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

20 Commissioner Imamura?

21 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 I align myself with the comments of Commissioner
23 Wright, specifically about, well, both the fact that I am in
24 agreement and believe that this is not inconsistent with the
25 comprehensive plan as well as appreciate your efforts for

1 preserving the historic integrity of the structure.

2 This is a map amendment so, to be clear, although I
3 know there are letters in opposition, members of the community
4 that are concerned but I think that's a result of conflating an
5 issue here where what might be done with this particular building
6 or their preference for, and this is just I suppose conjecture,
7 but, you know, their preference for the building to, you know,
8 remain a religious structure and turned over to another
9 congregation.

10 But I think what's important here is to, it's just as
11 much a there's a project maybe on the horizon, part of that is
12 also an educational opportunity here to remind everybody that
13 while they may not share or have that same preservation expertise
14 as Commissioner Wright or as your development team perhaps or
15 even an architect that might come in, that the option here is
16 really to perhaps maybe, as you mentioned earlier Mr. Kelley, you
17 know, this building falls into disrepair, vagrancy, rodents,
18 there are other issues here.

19 And so I guess the message here, the theme is that we
20 all share the same goal and that is to preserve the historic
21 integrity of the structure and what is the best way to do that,
22 and we in the preservation field know that, you know, that's with
23 adaptive re-use to keep historic structures and buildings alive
24 and maintained, right, and it still tells -- and I appreciate
25 your effort, as does Commissioner Wright, to provide some

1 interpretive signage perhaps or, you know, to maintain that
2 storyline for this particular structure.

3 So, again, I believe that this is, you know, not
4 inconsistent with the comprehensive plan. I agree that and
5 appreciate the honesty and earnestness of perhaps some of those
6 policies that are inconsistent, but that there are other policies
7 that outweigh this or goals that outweigh those inconsistencies.

8 So I don't have a particular question. I do appreciate
9 your very thoughtful and detailed presentation. I want to
10 encourage you to continue your community outreach and that's
11 really just an educational sort of moment with each person or
12 each group that you meet that, again, that you have this shared
13 goal, right, to maintain this structure. And so it's just, and
14 may have a different use now, right, but that doesn't take away
15 from the story. In fact, you know, it's another opportunity to
16 bring people into that building, right, to tell that story. So
17 I think people often forget about that.

18 So with that, Mr. Chairman, I have nothing further to
19 add and am very interested to hear my colleague from the National
20 Park Service.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

22 Commissioner Stidham?

23 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I have to echo what has already
24 been said by my fellow Commissioners. For a person who's been
25 in preservation for a very long time, it is extremely important

1 for a historic structure to remain and is often adaptive re-use.
2 That may be the best option for many structures, otherwise they
3 just fall in disrepair and then they're lost, their stories are
4 lost. But before us today is not historic preservation. It is
5 consistency with the comprehensive plan and I agree with the
6 comments that have already been shared related to the
7 consistency.

8 But I do applaud your efforts here in being consistent
9 with the comprehensive plan here also preserving a great landmark
10 and do strongly encourage you to continue working with the
11 community as you move forward with the project in the preservation
12 of that structure and the re-use of the facility in ways that
13 are great for the community.

14 So with that, I just echo what has already been said
15 so I won't belabor it, and thank you for your efforts.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Vice Chair Miller? Thank you.

17 Vice Chair Miller?

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
19 thank you to the Monument team for bringing this zoning map
20 amendment forward which I, and I applaud your community
21 engagement with garnering the support of the Advisory
22 Neighborhood Commission 2F and the Office of Planning, which
23 we'll hear from shortly. I'm not sure if the ANC is here or not
24 but we have their letter of unanimous support.

25 And I associate myself with the comments, all the

1 | comments of my colleagues. I think the zoning map first and
2 | foremost are sticking to the review, is consistency with the
3 | comprehensive plan, the zoning map and the ARTS-3 district
4 | certainly is consistent with the comprehensive plan's
5 | designations for the site as outlined by Brandice Elliott in
6 | terms of the land use element and the generalized policy element,
7 | and this ARTS, it's nearly adjacent to a very large ARTS-3
8 | district.

9 | So there's all that compatibility, and on the
10 | compatibility of the proposed adaptive re-use, and what
11 | alterations might be needed, that will be considered by another
12 | body which is very capable of evaluating those issues, Historic
13 | Preservation Review Board, and you've consulted with them and
14 | people will have an opportunity to participate in that, any
15 | hearing, public hearing that is held by them on the project that
16 | might be facilitated by the zoning map amendment.

17 | And it's certainly, the historic landmark church
18 | building is a beautiful building and everybody, including you I'm
19 | sure with your history of doing adaptive use projects, would want
20 | to maintain that and actually bring it up to, you know, it
21 | probably has been deteriorating structurally a little bit as it's
22 | been vacant for so long and maybe the church wasn't able also to
23 | afford to keep it in repair. So I think the adaptive re-use is
24 | a way to preserve our historic landmarks, as others have pointed
25 | out.

1 The zoning map amendment would allow the eating and
2 drinking establishment that you intend, you currently intend, and
3 we're not considering the project. There's no project before us.
4 There probably won't be a project before us but you've told the
5 community and everybody, you've been very transparent about what
6 your intentions are in terms of and eating and drinking
7 establishment in the church.

8 There wouldn't be residential units that might be also
9 facilitated by the zoning, well, I guess the existing zoning
10 might allow for the residential in the Parish building. Is it
11 just the Parish building or is it the Sunday School building?
12 There's three structures there. Can you just elaborate on what
13 the zoning map amendment or, even though it's not before us, what
14 your intent for, how many residential units do you envision being
15 in the adjacent building?

16 MR. DARBY: So it's a townhouse and it was connected
17 to the church by a door. So we have separated that actually.
18 We've sold that to a residential developer who intends to do two
19 residential units in that building.

20 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I see.

21 MR. DARBY: There'll be no further residential
22 buildings in the church building, that's the commercial use, of
23 the restaurant use.

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. And you understand
25 that there will be two residential units in that Parish?

1 MR. DARBY: Yeah. That's (audio interference). So
2 still we'll have to go through Historic Preservation review.

3 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Right. As all of the property
4 is --

5 MR. DARBY: Yes.

6 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: -- designated as a landmark.

7 MR. DARBY: Yes, sir.

8 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: And I also appreciate the
9 dialog you had with Commissioner Wright about even though the
10 interior is not a part of the current landmark designation, your
11 recognition of the beauty and the history that is reflected inside
12 that historic building and your desire to try to at least have
13 interpreted, if not structural maintenance of some of those
14 features.

15 So I don't really have any, I'm supportive of this
16 going forward. I look forward from hearing from those who might
17 testify today, but I appreciate you bringing this map amendment
18 forward and wish you luck on the project.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

21 My job right now is a very easy one because I will tell
22 you that my colleagues have addressed it, the experts that were
23 before me and asking questions and the record that I've read.
24 It's a very easy one to the point where I have no questions.

25 So what I'm going to do now is go to Ms. Schellin, and

1 thank you all for your presentation. I think it was very well
2 done and I think my colleagues expounded on some questions that
3 were very well done, I think which would help the record as well.
4 And I agree with everything each one of them said and that's very
5 rare. But this time it's 100 percent.

6 So, Ms. Schellin, now let's look through the general.
7 Let's see who we have from the ANC. Is anyone here from the ANC?
8 I know we have a report but I mean cross-examination.

9 MS. SCHELLIN: Sorry. I just checked and I don't see
10 Chairman Adams or Chairman Florio.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

12 MS. SCHELLIN: Or the authorized, that's Chairman Adams
13 for 2B and Chairman Florio for 2F.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

15 MS. SCHELLIN: I do not see either.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right.

17 Let's go to, any other government agencies?

18 MS. SCHELLIN: As I stated there was the Historic
19 Preservation report in the record.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Right.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: I believe that was 3D, and then you have
22 OP here, Philip Bradford. Other than that, no, sir. And the
23 DDOT report's in the record.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. I'll just see the DDOT report.
25 And we don't have any other government agencies other than HPRB?

1 MS. SCHELLIN: Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: We discussed their letter. DDOT
3 basically has no objections and they want to have the continued
4 coordination as this moves forward. So they have no objections
5 to the map amendment. All right.

6 Mr. Bradford from the Office of Planning?

7 MR. BRADFORD: When I was being called in I didn't hear
8 any of the dialog. Did you all move on to the Office of Planning?

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Oh, yeah. We just called on you.
10 Actually it was perfect timing. If you didn't say anything it
11 sounded like you heard it, so Mr. Bradford, you're on.

12 MR. BRADFORD: All right. Thank you. Good evening,
13 Chairman Hood and members of the Commissioner. Philip Bradford
14 with the Office of Planning.

15 OP is recommending approval of the Applicant MR 1401
16 15th Street, LLC's request for a map amendment at 1401 through
17 1405 15th Street, Northwest to re-zone the property from RA-5 to
18 ARTS-3. The future land use map designates the property as mixed
19 use with stripe land use categories on the site indicating medium
20 density residential and moderate density commercial.

21 The generalized policy map designates the property as
22 being within a neighborhood conservation area. A small portion
23 of the northern area of the subject property is within the Main
24 Street mixed use corridor designation. The ARTS-3 zone would
25 permit medium density mixed use development which is consistent

1 with the future land use map and generalized policy map and on
2 balance would not be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan
3 including when viewed through a racial equity lens.

4 The property is located in the near Northwest planning
5 area which is majority White but demographic data indicates a
6 decline in the White and Black population of the planning area
7 with increases in Asian, Hispanic and multi-racial groups. The
8 median income is higher than the District average and has a lower
9 cost burden than the District average indicating that the
10 planning area is relatively stable and economically sound.

11 OP is not recommending IZ Plus be applied to the
12 proposed map amendment. IZ Plus typically only applies when a
13 map amendment re-zones a property to a higher floor area ratio.
14 The existing base residential FAR under the RA-5 zoning is 6.0
15 and under the ARTS-3 zone the maximum is 4.0 with a 2.5 floor
16 area ratio for non-residential structures. This reduction in FAR
17 but expansion and permitted uses reduces development pressure on
18 the site and allows for various matter-of-right uses to occupy
19 the structure which will likely enable adaptive re-use of the
20 church and remove a vacancy from an otherwise vibrant area of the
21 District.

22 At the setdown meeting several members of the
23 Commission noted that historic preservation is not compatible
24 with additional density. OP has since discussed the property
25 with Historic Preservation staff who noted that part of the reason

1 | why the building is architecturally significant is due to the
2 | distinctive roof lines and dormer windows and it would be unlikely
3 | to construct an addition that would maintain the existing
4 | architectural character that got it listed as a historic building
5 | in the first place.

6 | OP does recognize the need for additional housing
7 | units, particularly in near Northwest as it has only achieved
8 | 33.4 percent of its affordable housing target. However, given
9 | these constraints on the site it's more appropriate for other
10 | more suitable larger and non-historic sites within the planning
11 | area to capture that need for additional dwelling units.

12 | The case record also includes several letters in
13 | opposition expressing concern regarding the potential uses and
14 | alteration to the historic structures on the property. Several
15 | letters imply that the map amendment would result in a demolition
16 | of the structures. It's important to make clear that what is
17 | before the Commission today is purely a map amendment which has
18 | no impact on the historic status of the structures. The structures
19 | will remain within the historic district and on the National
20 | Register, and retain all the protections of a historic designated
21 | site.

22 | It's also important to note that the ARTS-3 zoning
23 | permits religious-based uses as a matter-of-right which would not
24 | prevent the structures from remaining as a church or being
25 | converted back to a church in the future, and with that I conclude

1 my presentation and I'm available for any questions from the
2 Commission.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Mr. Bradford, for getting
5 straight to the point and also some misnomers and straightening
6 up some information towards the end. I really appreciate that
7 and I'm hoping those who had some of those concerns understand
8 exactly what's before the Commission this evening. So thank you.

9 Let's see if we have any questions or comments.
10 Commissioner Wright?

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: No. Thank you for your report.

12 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Commissioner Imamura?

13 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 I guess I have one question for Mr. Bradford, just to
15 reiterate something for the record and I didn't get the chance
16 to mention this in the first go around here, but the fact that
17 the structure will maintain or retain all of its protections,
18 historic protections, being listed on the National Register and
19 that should there be -- this is where I think for this particular
20 map amendment and potential project, right, this is where
21 government I think works at its best in that we're in our swim
22 lane for the zoning and land use, and the HPRB, the Historic
23 Preservation Review Board is another agency here and entity, or
24 rather an entity that will help keep the guard rails up in terms
25 of any modification made to the structure there, and so those are

1 the protections that are in place, right, for the residents of
2 the city to ensure that, you know, we maintain the historic fabric
3 of the city and outline the best use of land and properties that
4 come before us here.

5 So with that, I guess my question is, Mr. Bradford, is
6 just if you could reiterate that point that this particular
7 structure will maintain those protections.

8 MR. BRADFORD: Yes. It would maintain those
9 protections and any alterations would need to go through the
10 correct historic review process for any alterations and both the
11 buildings, the Parish House and the church and the Sunday School
12 will remain within the greater 14th Street historic district and
13 as individually listed buildings.

14 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Very good. Thank you, Mr.
15 Bradford. That provides comfort to me and I hope that it comforts
16 those that are expressing their concern.

17 All right. That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

19 Commissioner Stidham?

20 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Commissioner Imamura are often
21 on the same wavelength and I was going to point out that same
22 piece of information because I think it's very important for
23 everyone to understand that those protections remain and there
24 is the, there could be an opportunity in the future to revert
25 back. So all very important things to highlight, and thank you

1 for your report.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Sounds good.

3 Vice Chair Miller?

4 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: No questions. I agree with
5 the comments of my colleagues and appreciate your report, Mr.
6 Bradford, very concise and comprehensive. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I too have no questions. I agree
8 with what I've heard in discussion and, again, Mr. Bradford,
9 thank you for your report.

10 Let's see if the Applicant, Ms. Bloomfield, do you have
11 any questions of the Office of Planning or cross?

12 MS. BLOOMFIELD: I do not. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. And, again, Ms. Schellin I
14 don't think we have anyone here from the ANC, correct?

15 MS. SCHELLIN: Correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. All right. Well, let's keep
17 moving right along. Let's go to, okay.

18 Vice Chair Miller, do you have the ANC report handy?

19 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I do, Mr. Chairman.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You don't have to read the whole
21 report. If you can just let us know where they were.

22 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: It's very, I think it's only
23 one sentence. But it's in Exhibit No. 16E if I have the right
24 report from the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2F, a letter
25 dated October 15th in which it states that the ANC voted

1 | unanimously four to zero to zero to support the Applicant's
2 | request for a zoning map amendment to re-zone the church portion
3 | of the property, well I guess it's more than the church portion,
4 | but the church portion of the property to ARTS-3 to be consistent.
5 | It supports this re-zoning. It's signed by Commissioner Joe
6 | Florio, Chair of ANC 2F.

7 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Great. Thank you.

8 | Ms. Schellin, let's go to those in, let's go to all
9 | those who are in support. Let's bring them up. Can we call our
10 | witnesses?

11 | MS. SCHELLIN: All right. Let me see what we got.

12 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And before we get started, I'm
13 | hoping everyone heard the discussion. Some of the letters, we've
14 | discussed that. Let's make sure that we stay on point, if you
15 | would please. Thank you.

16 | Go ahead, Ms. Schellin.

17 | MS. SCHELLIN: Sure. Chairman Hood, we have no
18 | individuals in support. We just have three in opposition that
19 | have registered to testify.

20 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Well, let's bring up everyone
21 | who's in opposition? Do we have any undeclared?

22 | MS. SCHELLIN: No undeclared.

23 | CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Let's just bring up all those
24 | who are in opposition.

25 | MS. SCHELLIN: Okay. The three are Mr. Young, Brittany

1 Sawyer, Selwa Roosevelt and I apologize if I mispronounced that,
2 Christopher Moerman or [Mower-man], and again apologize for the
3 mispronunciation. It was either me or Chairman Hood.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. Let's start with Ms.
5 Sawyer. Are you off mute? There you go.

6 MS. SAWYER: I am now.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you. You may begin.

8 MS. SAWYER: Thank you.

9 I just want to reiterate, I'm here as a public witness
10 and a historic preservationist, and I appreciate the sentiment
11 across this panel of people who understand the important
12 significance that this building has in the District of Columbia,
13 and honors past presidents and our historical religious heritage.

14 And I just wanted to take time. I understand that this
15 is not the Historic Review Board and that this is a zoning
16 meeting, but my understanding also is another congregation is
17 prepared and willing to purchase the property and move forward,
18 and has presented a back-up offer if this does not go through.
19 So I do want to go on record as well to say there is a congregation
20 that is willing to purchase the property and maintain it as a
21 church and represent the historic legacy.

22 So I want to make sure that that is heard and understood
23 and, again, that's my sentiment, my sentiment is that it remains
24 a church because I don't understand how a restaurant -- I
25 understand adaptive re-use but I don't understand how a

1 restaurant honors the historical legacy so when there is a church
2 willing to maintain it as a church.

3 So that is my statement.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Sawyer.

5 Let me look at my colleagues. Are there any questions
6 of Ms. Sawyer? Okay. I'm seeing no. Okay.

7 Ms. Bloomfield, do you have any questions of Ms.
8 Sawyer?

9 MS. BLOOMFIELD: No. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And again we don't have any. Ms.
11 Sawyer, thank you. We appreciate you taking the time to come
12 and give us your position. Thank you.

13 All right. I think Chris Moerman and, again, forgive
14 me if Ms. Schellin and I are pronouncing your name incorrectly
15 but we'll start out with Mr. Moerman.

16 (Pause.)

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Mr. Moerman, can you unmute? There
18 you go.

19 MR. MOERMAN: Yes. Apologies. Okay.

20 Good afternoon. My name is Chris Moerman. I serve as
21 the leading founding pastor of Grace Capital City Church. My
22 church has been referenced here a few times in conversation so I
23 think it's appropriate I'm here. I'm grateful to speak and voice
24 my opposition to this proposed re-zoning and the
25 commercialization of Grace Reform Church.

1 I really believe it's not just a matter of land use.
2 This is a question of how we honor our history, protect our
3 architectural legacy and preserve sacred spaces that have served
4 the city for generations. Many of you are very familiar with
5 the architectural history of Grace Reform Church so I won't go
6 into all of that. Its stonework, the stained glass, the wood
7 carved interiors, far more than aesthetically significant, they
8 represent the craftsmanship and spiritual aspirations of a past
9 generation.

10 But I think more than that it's also a place with
11 historical meaning. It was the church home of course of President
12 Roosevelt during his presidency. He worshipped there regularly
13 and his presence, his pew, his connection to the church remain
14 as a living testimony to the values of public service, moral
15 integrity and civic responsibility.

16 And yet despite this deep historical and spiritual
17 importance, Grace Reformed has also suffered from years of
18 neglect by those entrusted with its stewardship. Previous owners
19 failed in their responsibilities on many levels, the first
20 failure being when they allowed the sacred space to deteriorate
21 and left open to the elements, overrun by rodents, stripped of
22 care. This wasn't just a failure of maintenance, it was a failure
23 of responsibility and owning a building with this depth of
24 spiritual and community history is not merely an asset to manage,
25 it is a trust to uphold and that trust was broken in the pursuit

1 of maximum profit.

2 The second failure, and I speak in line with what
3 Brittany had said also, that despite having competitive offers
4 from other churches that would restore the building and maintain
5 its cultural and spiritual legacy, they chose a path that would
6 see it completely gutted and commercialized. The church I lead
7 and represent is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational congregation
8 and we have made serious and ongoing efforts to purchase and
9 restore Grace Reformed. We had a vision not to turn it into a
10 commodity, but to bring it back to life as a place of worship,
11 community service and spiritual refuge.

12 We have gathered members of the Roosevelt family, the
13 White House Historical Association who are in full support of the
14 building remaining a church, and are willing to lend their support
15 in fundraising and consultation. We stand ready to do the work
16 and I want it noted that the idea that no congregation has been
17 willing to take on this project is false. We are here, we are
18 willing and we are prepared.

19 I really believe that to move forward and turning this
20 into a restaurant is not, is really the reward from neglect of
21 the previous owners and disregard for the public good, and so we
22 ask you to take into consideration the higher ideals, those that
23 elevate a city, beyond mere economics in places like this where
24 a community finds identity, community and hope, and I thank you
25 for your time.

1 I do ask the Commission to please approve my submission
2 to the record.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

4 I'm looking here. I thought I saw it already in the
5 record. Ms. Schellin, is his submission in the record?

6 MS. SCHELLIN: It is not. He submitted it today and I
7 told him when he testified, because it was less than 24 hours,
8 he would need to ask permission from you guys or if you guys just
9 tell me it's okay, I have it, I can go ahead and add it.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Let's add it. Any objections?
11 Let's go ahead and add it to the record, Ms. Schellin.

12 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you.

13 MR. MOERMAN: Thank you for that.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Any questions of Mr. Moerman?
15 Vice Chair Miller?

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
17 Moerman, for your testimony.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I too want to thank you, Mr. Moerman.
19 You know, we have explained exactly what's in front of this body
20 and that's where we are and I'm hoping things work out for you
21 all as well, working with the owners. But let's see how things
22 proceed for now.

23 Ms. Bloomfield, do you have any questions of Mr.
24 Moerman?

25 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you for your testimony. I do

1 not.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. All right. Mr. Moerman,
3 thank you very much. We appreciate your comments.

4 All right. I think the last person we have, Ms.
5 Schellin, is Selwa Roosevelt?

6 MS. SCHELLIN: That is correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Selwa Roosevelt, you're on
8 mute. If you could unmute. You may begin.

9 MS. ROOSEVELT: I do want to speak.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Go right ahead.

11 MS. ROOSEVELT: I see that I'm a blank.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, don't worry. Just speak.

13 MS. ROOSEVELT: Good afternoon, and thank you for
14 letting me speak with you.

15 I have lived in this city more than 70 years. I'm
16 quite old. As a member of the Roosevelt family, my late husband,
17 Archie Roosevelt, Junior, was a grandson of Theodore Roosevelt,
18 the president. I believe I have a unique perspective on the
19 strong historical and spiritual connections this church has to
20 our 26th president.

21 When people think of Teddy Roosevelt, many only know
22 him as the man who charged up San Juan Hill or his construction
23 of the Panama Canal, or his conservation efforts that led to the
24 creation of so many wonderful national parks. But Teddy had a
25 deeply spiritual side that was evidenced through his connection

1 with Grace Reformed Church, his place of worship during his
2 presidential years in Washington.

3 Grace Reformed Church was the president's spiritual
4 home and he really felt deeply, he was a man of great faith and
5 he laid the cornerstone of the church, as you all know, and
6 dedicated it in 1903. But he had an active correspondence with
7 the pastor. He talked about religion. He explained and sought
8 to make it a part of his life and it was really a part of his
9 life. His feelings for this church were so profound that when
10 he left the White House he gifted the church a full length
11 portrait of himself so that he might remain among the
12 congregation. That portrait I've seen and it's really quite a
13 handsome one, and the interiors are marked with pews that have
14 where he sat and his particular place was always reserved for
15 him.

16 I keep thinking about this wonderful man which we all
17 of course honor and love -- oh, turn that off. Somebody's
18 calling. Anyway, it's just not an old building, it's a sacred
19 part of our nation's heritage and I feel so strongly and hope so
20 much that it will remain a church. It's just as important for
21 the residents of this city, whatever racial origin, to have a
22 place they can go and worship. Nothing will stop them from going
23 into that church if there is an active church, and I think there
24 would be. I think Mr. Moerman is trying very hard to do this,
25 but of course it's difficult. I would do anything I can to help

1 him. I'm getting quite old and I'm not out there promoting doing
2 things, but I came to this because I really felt strongly about
3 the -- that's one of my nieces not realizing she's interrupting.

4 Anyway, the family stands united of course wanting to
5 see it remain a church and that's because the inspiration he
6 gives to young people is enormous, even those who only know him
7 as charging up San Juan Hill, to find out that he charged himself
8 to the church every single Sunday would probably have an effect.

9 I just feel that the thought of it turning into a
10 restaurant or something similar is, I can't even express how
11 badly it makes me feel. I'll probably be dead before it's done.
12 I may never see it. But I felt strongly enough to want to speak
13 to you today and to say that an inspiration for young people is
14 right there. He's one of the presidents that they look up to
15 that they can admire, and to know that this is something they
16 could share with him seems to me something very, very important
17 and we have so little of it now.

18 So I'm appealing to you all to consider giving Mr.
19 Moerman a chance to find another church or his own church, and
20 keep it a church. Some of the auxiliary parts maybe could be
21 used in other ways, I don't know enough to make any suggestion,
22 but the church part should stay a church.

23 Thank you so much for listening to me.

24 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Ms. Roosevelt. We
25 appreciate your heartfelt testimony to us and I'm sure the

1 Applicants heard that, and we thank you for all the service that
2 your family has done to this country and abroad.

3 Let me see if my colleagues have any questions or
4 comments.

5 Commissioner Wright?

6 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: No. Only that I found Mrs.
7 Roosevelt's comments very moving and I, again, understand the
8 importance of this building. I just think that it is an
9 unfortunate reality that the ability to keep it renovated and
10 standing doesn't seem to be possible as a church and that this
11 adaptive re-use is another route to keeping this beautiful
12 important building available to as many people in the community
13 and in the public as possible.

14 You know, I know that Mr. Moerman has been working for
15 quite a few years to raise money to try to renovate this church,
16 but it just hasn't come together and now there's an opportunity
17 to see it renovated, to see it interpreted, to see Theodore
18 Roosevelt's connection with the church interpreted for the public
19 and I think that that hopefully will be a very good thing,
20 although I certainly understand that it is a very difficult
21 change.

22 MS. ROOSEVELT: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

24 Commissioner Imamura?

25 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: I don't have anything further

1 to add. I think Commissioner Wright was very articulate and I
2 align myself with her comments, and thank you, Ms. Roosevelt.

3 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

4 Commissioner Stidham?

5 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Thank you very much, Ms.
6 Roosevelt, for your testimony. I don't have any questions or
7 comments and I do align with everything my fellow Commissioner
8 Wright has already mentioned, and thank you for being here this
9 evening.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

11 And Vice Chair Miller?

12 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
13 thank you, Ambassador Roosevelt, for your testimony. Very
14 passionate, and educational about the history and hopefully that
15 history will be preserved as much as possible.

16 The church use, we're not changing anything about a
17 church use (audio interference) make it under existing zoning.
18 It's permitted under the proposed zoning. The existing zoning
19 will allow much more density with the housing than the proposed
20 zoning would and housing is, as I think the Applicant and maybe
21 the Office of Planning testified, any conversion to residential
22 would impair the structural integrity inside and maybe outside
23 even, more so than an eating and drinking establishment would.
24 But we can't dictate the use. We're not changing the church's
25 use of the property being possibly there in the future.

1 So, but I appreciate you bringing it forward and the
2 passion and inspiration that you brought to your testimony to us
3 today.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Bloomfield, do you have any
6 questions of Ms. Roosevelt?

7 MS. BLOOMFIELD: I do not have any questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

9 Again, thank you, Ms. Roosevelt. We appreciate you
10 taking the time and coming to us and giving us that perspective.

11 Thank you.

12 Ms. Bloomfield, I guess we can do closing. Do my
13 colleagues have any other questions or comments? Okay. Ms.
14 Bloomfield, can we do closing, or rebuttal and closing, if you
15 have anything?

16 MS. BLOOMFIELD: Yes. Absolutely. Sure.

17 You know, I don't have much. I think everything is
18 really out on the case record at this point. We do appreciate
19 the three folks who came out to testify. Appreciate their
20 position on it. Appreciate also that we believe very strongly
21 and believe that we have presented today and in the case record
22 that the application meets the legal standard of review for a
23 zoning map amendment to the ARTS-3 zone, and I will leave it at
24 that.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right.

2 So we'll close the case record, and I guess we will,
3 unless I hear otherwise, we will go ahead and move forward. I
4 think the case record warrants us to go ahead and move forward.
5 I don't think we need to hold off on this.

6 We have heard this evening, as well as in the case
7 record, the case made to go ahead and do a re-zoning, a map
8 amendment, I'm sorry, and one of the things that I've heard and
9 one of the things that I think is very important, and I think
10 Commissioner Imamura brought it up, was the protections are still
11 there for whatever use.

12 And as I was listening to this, I wasn't going to
13 mention it because I don't want to bring up another case, but
14 there's another case that's not even as eloquent as this one
15 because one of the things that the Baptist ministers have called
16 me down years ago on North Capitol Street was when the church
17 use was changing to a strip club. That was very offensive.

18 So I know, you know, there are uses and this here is
19 more, this here is more clean. I think that this is well thought
20 of and I know Monument has, I'm thinking of monumental, Monument
21 has been listening and they've been sitting here the whole time
22 hearing the concerns of our three who testified today and I'm
23 sure, as has already been mentioned, they will take that into
24 consideration as they continue to move forward to be able to
25 preserve what we do have for the best interests of the residents

1 of the city.

2 And there's a rich history there and to be honored
3 tonight to have a family member of the former president I think
4 is spectacular. So I'll leave it at that, but I will be voting
5 in favor of this map amendment. Let me hear from others.

6 Commissioner Wright?

7 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: No. I agree with you completely
8 and I feel ready to move forward with this map amendment.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

10 And Commissioner Imamura?

11 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: I'm in agreement with you, Mr.
12 Chairman. Ready to move forward.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

14 Commissioner Stidham? Anything?

15 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I am too ready to support.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

17 Vice Chair Miller?

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'm also ready to move
19 forward. Is this a two vote case?

20 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: You know, Ms. Schellin, you have to
21 help me. Since we changed the rules I can't remember what's two
22 vote and one vote no more.

23 MR. RITTING: Two. This is Mr. Ritting. There's two
24 votes. It's a map amendment, so requires referral to NCDC.

25 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

1 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: It's two votes, and we're not
3 looking for anything. Commissioner Wright, would you make the
4 motion?

5 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: I'm glad to although I'm trying
6 to get to my information so that I can do it. I believe that I
7 can do it though.

8 I move that we approve the map amendment, case I believe
9 it's 24-19? Anyone can correct me.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: It's 16, 24-16.

11 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Sixteen. Okay. That's my upside
12 down dyslexia, 24-16, and that we allow the re-zoning to the ARTS
13 zone.

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Can I get a second? Commissioner
15 Imamura?

16 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'll second. I'll second
17 that motion for us to take approval of proposed action tonight.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

19 It's been moved and properly seconded, or proposed.
20 Any further discussion? Not hearing any, Ms. Schellin, would you
21 do a roll call vote, please?

22 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes.

23 Commissioner Miller?

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Hood?

1 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

2 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Imamura?

3 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Yes.

4 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Stidham?

5 CHAIRPERSON STIDHAM: Yes.

6 MS. SCHELLIN: The vote is five to zero to zero to take
7 proposed action on Zoning Commission Case No. 24-16 and I don't
8 believe you guys asked for any additional information. So we
9 will refer this to NCPC for a 30 day comment period. The record
10 will be closed other than to have the Applicant provide us with
11 draft order by, who is on this?

12 Mr. Ritting, is this, does this rise to the level of a
13 summary order or not?

14 MR. RITTING: Well, there was some opposition.

15 MS. SCHELLIN: There was. So no. Okay.

16 So draft findings, facts, conclusions of law within two
17 weeks?

18 MR. RITTING: Yes.

19 MS. SCHELLIN: By 3 p.m. And then we'll put this on
20 after that 30 day comment period, whatever that date is, for
21 final action.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

24 And, Commissioner Wright, I will tell you you did good.
25 You remembered the 24 and I was thinking when I had to remember

1 that, I wouldn't even remember the 24. So you did a good job.

2 All right.

3 The Zoning Commission will meet, Ms. Schellin, do we
4 have anything else tonight?

5 MS. SCHELLIN: Nothing else.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

7 The Zoning Commission will meet again, I believe May
8 the 29th?

9 MS. SCHELLIN: That's correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: And that's our regular meeting.
11 We'll be on these same platforms at 4 p.m. With that, I want to
12 thank everyone for their participation tonight in this particular
13 case, and you all have a great holiday and be safe.

14 Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the
16 record at 5:31 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Hearing

Before: DC OZ

Date: 05-22-25

Place: Via Videoconferencing

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.


Ildiko Niyari