

GOVERNMENT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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ZONING COMMISSION

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PUBLIC HEARING

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IN THE MATTER OF: :
 :
Title 11, Zoning Regulations : Case No.
Comprehensive Text Revisions : 08-06A
 :
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Saturday, February 8, 2014

Dunbar High School Auditorium
101 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

The Public Hearing of Case No. 08-06A by the District of Columbia Zoning Commission convened at 9:00 a.m. in the Auditorium of Dunbar High School at 101 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C., 20001, Anthony J. Hood, Chairman, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

- MARCIE COHEN, Vice Chair
- ANTHONY J. HOOD, Chairman
- PETER MAY, Commissioner (NPS)
- ROBERT MILLER, Commissioner
- MICHAEL G. TURNBULL,
- FAIA, Commissioner(AOC)

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OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

SARA BENJAMIN BARDIN, Director
ZELALEM HILL
SHARON S. SCHELLIN, Secretary

OFFICE OF PLANNING STAFF PRESENT:

JOEL LAWSON
ELISE VITALE

The transcript constitutes the minutes from the Public Hearing held on February 8, 2014.

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

9:01 a.m.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We=re getting ready to get started.

This is the public hearing of the Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia for Saturday, February 8th, 2014.

My name is Anthony Hood. Joining me are Vice Chair Cohen, Commissioner Miller, Commissioner May, and Commissioner Turnbull. We=re also joined by the Office of Zoning Staff, Ms. Sara Bardin, our director; Ms. Sharon Schellin; and Ms. Zee Hill. Office of Planning Staff, we=re joined by Mr. Lawson and Mr. Vitale.

This proceeding is being recorded by a court reporter. Accordingly, we must ask you to refrain from any disruptive noises or actions in the auditorium, including a display of any signs, or projects, or objects. Excuse me.

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The subject of this morning's hearing is Zoning Commission Case Number 08-06A. This is a request by the Office of Planning for comprehensive revisions and amendments to the Zoning Regulations.

Notice of today's hearing was published in the D.C. Register on December 20th, 2013. And copies of that announcement are available in the back, to my left, as you come in to the door.

This hearing will be conducted in accordance with provisions of 11DCMR 3012 as follows: preliminary matters, testimony from the public. The following time constraints remain in this hearing: organizations, five minutes; individuals, three minutes. The Commission intends to adhere to the time limits as strictly as possible in order to hear the case in a reasonable period of time.

The Commission reserves the right to change the time limits for presentations, if necessary. And notes that no time shall be

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ceded.

As noted in the Public Notice of the public hearing, testimony will be limited to individuals, organizations, or associations that have not previously testified before the Commission on this case. Witnesses may only testify in the Ward in which they reside. So today, it will be Wards 5 and 6.

Persons who are -- who have previously testified but still want to provide the Commission with additional comments may do so by submitting comments in writing. The exception to testifying again will be the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, since they represent many District residents.

We do ask that if an ANC Commissioner has previously testified and is going to provide additional testimony this morning, that they confine their comments to new subject matter that they have not yet presented.

All persons appearing before the

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Commission are to fill out two witness cards. These cards are also located in the back, on the table as you come in.

Upon coming forward to speak to the Commission, please give both cards to Ms. Hill. I ask her to raise her hand. Ms. Hill.

When presenting information to the Commission, please turn on the speaker to the microphone first, stating your name and home address. When you are finished speaking, please turn your microphone off so that your microphone is no longer picking up sound and background noise.

The decision of the Commission in this case must be based exclusively on the public record. To avoid any appearance to the contrary, the Commission requests persons present not engage the members of the Commission in conversation during any recess or at any time.

In addition, there should be no direct contact, whatsoever, with a

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Commissioner concerning this matter, be it written, electronic, or by telephone.

Any materials received directly by a Commissioner will be discarded without being read, and any calls will be ignored.

The staff will be available throughout the hearing to discuss procedural questions.

I would also ask that you not repeat testimony that has already been given. Rather than repeating the same comments, I would suggest that you state you agree with the testimony that has already been given, and add any additional comments that we may, that we may not have heard yet.

Please turn off all beepers and cell phones at this time so not to disrupt these proceedings.

At this time, the Commission will consider any preliminary matters. Does the staff have any preliminary matters?

MS. SCHELLIN: I have just that the

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staff=s been advised that there are some people that are still waiting to get through security. So we do have some more people coming in. But we could get started, and we=d have to go back and call some witnesses again.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay.

MS. SCHELLIN: Because they may be stuck out there in the hallway, trying to get through.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay.

MS. SCHELLIN: And that the time clock is here on the table. So ask people to, you know, look at that, watch that for time.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: I have a question. Is this being videoed? Okay.

MS. SCHELLIN: It is not.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. All right. I do have an announcement. I will probably make this announcement along with the others, as the others come in, try to keep everyone informed.

First, the Office of Planning will

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be holding open houses in at least two wards east of the river, and at least two wards west of the river. Further details will be available on OP=s website in the very near future, at planning.dc.gov and the Office of Planning -- and the Office of Zoning will also post the news items on the, on its website at dcoz.dc.gov. And also, if the -- to keep the further actions of what the Commission is moving forward, you can call 202-727-6311. I would also encourage you to check the website for further information.

Second, as a result of these further hearings, the Zoning Commission has decided to leave the record open, in this case, until Thursday, April the 17th, instead of March the 3rd. That allows for an additional six weeks to submit written comments. And again, a lot of this is coming from some of the comments we=ve heard thus far from the community.

So Ms. Schellin, do we have any other preliminary matters?

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MS. SCHELLIN: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Then we'll go with the list. We'll go ahead and get started.

We appreciate everyone coming out today. We know that Saturday is a busy day for you. And we appreciate you coming out to give us input on this process.

Let me first apologize for mispronouncing any names. If it sounds close, I would ask that you come forward, and sit on the front row, and then each person, once you're called, will come up to the podium. And that's where you will provide your testimony. Okay. Thank you.

Betsy McDaniel, Sarah Frazier, Jessica Christy, Dan Miller, Colin Hughes, Robert Ehrmann, Christian Alexander, Christopher Winnike, Anthony Jones, Jamal Kadri, Malcolm Kenton, Elvira Sisolak --

PARTICIPANT: Sir, my name was called.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Just come

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on, just come on. It=s enough room in the front row.

Marsha Lea, Victoria Church, Bill Sisolak, Lynn Grasso. That=s all I have.

Anyone else who=s present who would like to testify, you just raise your hand, and let me see. You can come forward, come forward. Ms. Ward and Ms. Penn, come forward. The young lady that raised your hand, you can come forward.

Anyone else? Okay. This is going to be an early Saturday.

What I=m going to start -- what I=m going to do is start to my right, your left, and I would ask the young lady who=s putting the stuff, if you could just come forward. And you may begin. Identify yourself, what ward you live in, your address, and we=ll go from there.

MS. PURDY: I have some copies of my testimony.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. You can pass those in to our staff. And if you have

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testimony to provide, prior to coming up, if you can just hand it to our staff, that will be great.

If we can get it in advance, we like to follow you as you read your testimony.

MS. PURDY: Well, good morning.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Good morning.

MS. PURDY: This is exciting to get to go first. Thank you.

My name is Kristin Purdy and I'm a Shaw resident. I live on R Street, right by Rhode Island and 6th Avenue or 6th Street.

So I've lived in D.C. for nearly seven years and definitely consider the city my home.

I'm here this morning to express my strong support for the proposed update to the D.C. Zoning Code. Specifically, the changes to the parking requirements. It's time for the Zoning Commission to revise D.C.'s outdated zoning regulations and parking. And help our city become even more vibrant, walkable, and

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inclusive. By eliminating and reducing parking minimums, we can make our city even better.

After a summer spent in D.C., I was sold on the city because of our great transit options and the walkable neighborhoods. I moved here permanently for a job with a non-profit and I knew I could easily have a car free lifestyle, helping me save money, which is important, you know, as a non-profit worker. And be healthier.

I sold my car and looked for an apartment near amenities, like most of my friends in the city. I knew I wanted to be able to walk to get groceries, drop off my dry cleaning, and be close to some our great bus lines.

I first lived in Mount Pleasant and loved the community feel, the diversity of residents, and the great Main Street amenities.

More recently, I moved to Shaw. And I happily live across the street from the

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Metro, bus lines, and bike share, which is how I got here today. And these all allow me to continue my car free life. I easily bike to work and can walk to all of my other errands and social events. And the rare times that I want to use a car, I rent a zip car, or a car to go.

With the opening of the new O Street Giant, which is great, and the influx of restaurants, Shaw is becoming even more walkable but also more pricey. New condos and apartment complexes are opening all the time. And whatever we can do to make them more affordable is really important.

I would love to buy a place in my neighborhood, but if unit prices continue to subsidize the up to \$50,000 parking spaces that are currently required, I would never be able to afford a place.

Reforming the parking mandates helps residents who want to choose more sustainable and affordable transportation options. It will make building housing

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cheaper, allowing our city to be even more affordable, and inclusive.

I support the zoning update because I want to continue living in neighborhoods that are vibrant, diverse, and walkable. I want to continue saving money in a car free life, and be able to purchase a residence in the city that I love.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Hold your place. We may have a few questions. Any questions? Okay. Not seeing any. You were first, so you got off easy. Thank you.

Okay. Next.

MR. EHRMANN: Good morning, my name is Rob Ehrmann. And I live on the corner of 5th and K, Northwest.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Can you speak up?

MR. EHRMANN: Sure. My name is Rob Ehrmann. I live on the corner of 5th and K, Northwest.

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Members of the Commission, thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

I support the completion of the Zoning update and applaud D.C. for attempting to address some of the planning issues in our city.

The status quo is unsustainable and does not reflect the desires of all the peoples of the District of Columbia.

To be clear, I think that the Zoning Code should embrace the District as an urban center and not codify a hybrid urban/suburban system.

Specific policies that I support include: eliminating parking minimums, allowing accessory dwellings, reforming the zoning code to allow for corner stores in residential areas, and simplifying the zoning code so that property owners and residents are all comfortable with the understanding of the law.

I am aware that compromises have

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already been made on the parking minimums due to the opposition of a vocal portion of residents, and I'm willing to accept the compromise in the interest of implementing the other good work that the Office of Planning has done.

I'd like to take a minute to tell you why I live in D.C. and why I choose to come today. Because I think it's important for the members of the Commission to hear from my generation of residents when considering how to plan for the future of our city. After all, we're the ones who the changes will effect the most.

I think that I exemplify a good number of residents that probably don't have time to dive into the details of the proposed zoning update, but nevertheless, consider the District a great city that could be improved through better public policy and design. I have lived in the District on and off since 2002. Like many people in my generation,

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especially in this area, I choose to live a life as car free as possible. I grew up in a small rural town which required a 15 minute car ride to the nearest convenience store and I absolutely hated the isolation that stemmed from the settlement design.

I came to D.C. to go to school and felt liberated to be able to finally live in a place where I could walk or bike or take mass transportation and not feel at all constrained in my life.

After a few years living in other cities, I returned to D.C. with my wife because both of us began working for the federal government. We choose to live in the District because we saw that it had walkable welcoming neighborhoods. But we also recognized that the city could be better. We dream of owning property and raising a family here in the District some day. And we=d like to do that in a neighborhood that is affordable and that doesn=t assume that every couple owns a car.

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The current zoning car code doesn't really allow for this. It assumes that residents will make the same choices that our predecessors made 50 years ago. I support the changes to the Zoning Code because I think that a change in the parking requirements, accessory dwellings, and the simplification of the code will allow the creation and revitalization of neighborhoods that enable our children to walk to school or to the corner store safely. I think that these changes will allow houses and apartments to be built more affordably to the benefit of all citizens in our city, regardless of income. And I believe that these changes will help our city to grow into a city that balances the preservation of our history with the growth of our population.

Thank you, again, for allowing me to testify today. And again, I urge the members of the Commission to pass the zoning update without further delay or amendment.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Thank you. Any

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questions, colleagues? Not seeing any.
Thank you.

MR. EHRMANN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Next.

MR. MILLER: Hi, my name is Dan Miller. I'm a Ward 6 resident. I live in Southwest Waterfront, a couple blocks west of the ballpark.

I want to thank the members of the zoning commission for taking the time to listen today and for putting a lot of hard work on this update. And I urge you to pass this zoning update to make sure that residents can live more affordably and conveniently whether or not they own a car.

I moved to D.C. when I was 18. I went to American University. And I love the city. I've been here 12 years.

But the problem is that, today, it's a lot harder to get that experience because prices have been rising, and many residents, including both working class residents and

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younger people, are being priced out.

The easiest and best way to solve this problem is to increase the housing supply, and the zoning update is a great way to do that. Accessory dwelling units, for example, allow more people to live in the same housing stock, which increases sustainability and increases housing supply, lowering rents. Eliminating parking minimums makes it easier and cheaper to build more housing without requiring new residents to own a car. And living without a car is one of the best ways to live a more frugal and sustainable lifestyle. I haven't owned a car in D.C. because it's expensive and because I can get around without needing one. I walk, I take the Metro, I take car to go, or bike share. It's just a cheaper and better way to live. And it makes my life easier.

Height regulations too, limit construction. They -- even in areas that are not important view sheds, places like Van Ness or close to Friendship Heights get constricted

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supply, it drives up rents, makes housing more expensive, and makes the District a place that you can't afford to live.

In short, D.C.'s laws, including the zoning code, conspire to restrict the supply of housing and drive up rents. And that makes the city less hospitable to young people, to working class people, to anyone but the wealthy.

The update's a good start. I'm aware that compromises have been made on the parking minimums. But as the previous testifier said, these compromises are acceptable and the zoning update should be passed without delay.

I want D.C. to be a place where everyone, not just the wealthy, can afford, can afford to live, can go to a picnic in Dupont Circle on a gorgeous day, can go to some of the best Ethiopian food you'll find outside of Ethiopia, can live without owning a car, and without spending a ridiculous amount of money

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on rent. I want D.C. to remain affordable, walkable, and livable. And this zoning update is the best way to ensure that.

I urge you to pass it.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Any questions? Thank you very much. We appreciate you all=s testimony, your testimony.

Next.

MR. KENTON: Good morning. My name is Malcolm Kenton. I live just a few blocks away at 31 Florida Avenue, Northwest, here in Ward 5.

I moved to the District in the spring of 2009 from Greensboro, North Carolina, where I grew up and attended college. While Greensboro offered many amenities and a good quality of life, as one who=s concerned about the environment and prefers not to drive for multiple reasons, I was frustrated by the degree to which the ability to fully take advantage of all Greensboro had to offer

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depended on having a car.

When I accepted a job located near Union Station here in D.C., I sought to live close enough to work that I could walk or bike there in half an hour or less, and use my bike for public transportation for most other errands and routine travel around town.

Although this means paying a higher rent that I would have had to living farther out in the suburbs, the amount of money I save on transportation compensates for it. I sold my car and moved into a shard row house in the south end of Bloomingdale. With all the transportation choices at my disposal, including Metro Rail, bus, bicycle, bike sharing, car sharing, and ride sharing, owning a car would be more of a liability than an asset.

I am worried that the lifestyle that I enjoy living with in D.C.=s urban core is becoming financially out of reach for too many people, including myself, as home prices and rents continue to rise. I want the District

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and our region to manage inevitable growth in such a way that the vast majority of new and existing residents can have the transportation choices I enjoy.

That is one of my top priorities for the zoning re-write are to reduce or eliminate off street parking minimums, to allow for corner stores to open more easily in residential neighborhoods, and to allow home owners to add accessory dwelling units on their properties.

The increased cost of housing in the District is perhaps the greatest barrier to ensuring that the city remains diverse and welcoming to people of all backgrounds, professions, and income brackets.

At the same time, traffic congestion and air pollution caused by over-reliance on the automobile for routine trips continue to plague our region=s quality of life. Making off street parking minimums for new housing developments as low as possible

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helps to address both these challenges by creating incentives to drive -- by creating incentives not to drive and making housing less costly.

Allowing more people to live in existing buildings further reduces the cost of housing. That=s why I strongly support the re-write of Title D to allow one accessory unit on owner occupied properties in single family residential zones as a matter of right.

Finally, more small businesses should have the opportunity to serve their neighbors within residential areas within walking distance by opening corner stores.

I look forward to being able to remain in D.C. affordably and continue to enjoy the variety of amenities that are within an easy walk, bike ride, bus or Metro ride of my home.

I=m glad that the Office of Planning and the Zoning Commission are finally re-writing an outdated zoning code to make the law compatible with the changing shape of our

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city and the desires of its residences.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my comments.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Commissioners, any questions? All right. Thank you.

Next.

MR. ALEXANDER: Good morning.

PARTICIPANT: Good morning.

MR. ALEXANDER: Good morning. My name is Christian Alexander and I'm a resident of Ward 6. And I'm here to speak in favor of the zoning code update.

Although I've only lived in D.C. for a few years, my dad grew up in the D.C. Metro area in the 1960s, the 1970s. And as a result, I've some sense of the city that he knew when he was growing up here. And I'll mention that that was a city that this current zoning code structured and shaped.

But thanks to the city's transportation system into my neighborhood,

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which includes a number of small businesses in close proximity to me, I'm able to live a nearly car free life. And that includes even Christmas tree shopping. If you take a look on the other side of my testimony, you can see a picture.

I'd like all D.C. residents to be afforded this same opportunity and I think this zoning code update takes us a step in this direction.

This Commission has a choice. It can stick to the outdated planning policies that structured the city that my father grew up in or it can take modest steps, such as this update to shape the city to fit the needs of current and future residents like me.

This update includes modest proposals that are important to enhancing livability, affordability, and sustainability. Its parking revisions remove costly subsidies for cars and increases density, which allows for the possibility of

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more affordable and diverse housing. Its accessory apartment provision also allows for more options for housing, and its neighborhood corner store provision allows for better access for local businesses.

These provisions all provide increase options. Options on where to live, where to go, and how to get there. And these options, in turn, provide mobile and economic freedom to D.C. residents.

Now, I appreciate the concerns that some opponents have of these changes, and I think it is good that these changes are thoroughly vetted and debated.

I thank the Commission for giving this measure the attention it deserves.

I also think that these changes are only one step, only one part of the solution, and that they alone will not change things for the better, overnight. We need to continue to work to address real concerns regarding equity and respect for D.C.'s great established

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communities.

However, while keeping in mind valid concerns, I think failing to implement these changes is a step backwards. The fact is, these modest proposals are well thought out and have been the subject of substantial public outreach and public opportunity, or opportunity for public input. Far from threatening the integrity of D.C. communities, these changes provide an updated blueprint for a healthy, livable, and modern city.

Please those in favor of this update.

Thank you very much.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioners, any questions?

Commissioner May.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes. I'm just curious, have you had the opportunity to discuss the zoning reg rewrite with your father?

MR. ALEXANDER: With my father?

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COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

MR. ALEXANDER: I have briefly,
yes.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Does he have any
thoughts on it, having grown up in the area?

MR. ALEXANDER: Yes, I mean, it=s
funny because he=s obviously of a different
generation: a generation that was moving
towards the suburbs and moving towards
greater use of cars. And you know, it=s funny
he doesn=t live in the area anymore but he, you
know, he likes the idea. He thinks it=s kind
of crazy the idea that I can live without a car
but he thinks it=s a, he thinks it=s a step in
the right direction, although he can=t fully
understand it, I guess.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Okay. Thank
you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Mr. Alexander, and
a picture is worth a thousand words. Do you
think as you get older, things may change?
75/80, think you=ll be riding on a bicycle with

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a Christmas tree on the back?

MR. ALEXANDER: Yes, you're right. I probably won't be. I think if I'm 75 or 80, I hope I'm not driving anymore because I think, at that point in time, I, you know, I'm not sure if I'll be able to, if I'll have the capacity to do that. I hope that they'll be provisions or policies in place that will help me live the lifestyle that I want to live. And I understand that there are measures that we have to take to take into consideration, you know, people who aren't young who can't bike everywhere, and I understand that.

But I think this is one part of the puzzle, and I think this is an important part, and I think there are other steps that we need to take as well. And I hope we can work to make that happen.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Great. Any other questions?

Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER MAY: I would just

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comment, I think when he=s 75 or 80, the car will be driving itself.

MR. ALEXANDER: That=s another possibility.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: That=s true.
That=s true.

MR. ALEXANDER: I hope, yes.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

MR. ALEXANDER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Next.

MS. WARD: Good morning commissioners. I am Martha Ward. I live at 2711 South Dakota Avenue, Northeast, Ward 5, in the community of Woodridge South, which is bounded by Eastern and Bladensburg Road Northeast, down almost to Queens Chapel Road and over -- the dividing line is the CSX Railroad, which used to be called the B&O Railroad.

We=ve come here today to support the light industrial partnering with residential. I grew up in the house where I live since 1949;

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I'm 68 years old. And the light industrial and the commercial has always been part of our community.

What has happened in the last few years is that we have gotten clubs, noise, strip clubs, other types of venues, marijuana growing facilities etcetera. We would like to get back to the industrial partnering.

And let me just name a few. We had that George's Appliance place on Queens Chapel Road, which is now a very troublesome club, and it has been with all its owners. We had, on Bladensburg Road, we had flower shops, and apple and fruit company, a tavern, a custom mattress making place, Mr. Kitchen's grocery store, a liquor store, that's just to name a few. Down the street, further on Bladensburg Road toward Maryland but still on the D.C. side, we had the Wilson's Sport Shop, we had a boating company etcetera, etcetera. We had great partnering with these companies.

Many of the stores that I mentioned,

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people lived above these stores, and they also hired locally, from our community. There were other people there too, but locally grown customers as well as workers.

We ask you to consider these things in the great job that you are doing.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

Let=s see if we have any questions.

Okay. None.

Thank you very much.

Next.

MR. KADRI: Hi. My name is --

CHAIRMAN HOOD: You want to be on the microphone.

MR. KADRI: My name is Jamal Kadri. I live at 700 K Street, Northeast. It=s -- let=s see -- I=m looking at Square 857. I submitted lengthy you bring testimony --

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Could you speak into the mic, please?

MR. KADRI: Sorry. -- that sort of

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chronicled the trials and travails of a special exception process that I went through with BZA for an 800 square foot home that I own near Eastern Market.

Ultimately, the compromise that we had to make to have that property permitted with the connecting wing that made it like a dumbbell instead of an accessory dwelling -- which both of my adjacent neighbors supported, it had the support of the ANC, it had the support of the HPRB because it would have preserved all of the historic fabric of the 1860s home -- was too small and too costly to build. So for the same money, I bought on the corner of 7th and K, across from what=s now J.O. Wilson.

And what I=ve come to see in the past three or four years, living where we live, is a lot of my neighbors who -- not just in terms of affordability but accessibility -- have had to sell their homes because it=s many steps up to the house and they couldn=t because they had asthma, or diabetes, or were in a wheelchair,

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had no access, really, to their home.

Some of these homes -- and I think when everybody's talking about like accessory dwellings they're envisioning a different spot. The block that I want you to think about is this one here, which is square 857, it's a super block that's between 6th and 7th, and I and K, and it's where the B&O Railroad used to come through before the orientation changed to Union Station.

So it's got a 30 foot wide alley; there's homes with over a hundred feet of yard; the homes are only 40/50 feet deep; there's a big yard; and then there's a garage. And these garages are 18 feet wide; they're 25 feet deep; they're as sizable as some of the one and two bedroom condos that are selling for 3 or \$400,000; and they could be accessible habitat for somebody who wants to choose to age in place, and live in their garage, and rent their home. But you can't do that.

Now if you were in R1, we have zoning

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that allows you to have a similar kind of carriage house for your domestic help, but in R4, you're SOL. You have to come back and go to BZA and do a process, which in my experience, costs a lot of money because it's not set up for civilians. It's set up for land-use attorneys and architects.

And I spent more money than I would have spent just buying a tiny house. Oh, sorry.

Anyway. This is my favorite book. If every body who hasn't read it and you want copy, I'll donate it to the whomever. It's out of print but you can find it. And it tells the story of when we used to have 20,000 people living in --

CHAIRMAN HOOD: You want to make sure you're on the mic so we can get this recorded actually. I'm going to let you finish, but you want to make sure you're on the mic.

MR. KADRI: Yes, I just -- I think

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that there=s a way to move forward that looks towards the past, and when we used to house people affordably in occupied alleys that are now illegal to rebuild. Some of the most charming places that people spend a half a million dollars for, you know, a little 14 by 28 foot house that was built for newly emancipated slaves in Brown=s Court now sells for 500 grand. But you can=t rebuild one if it=s been torn down.

So I don=t think that the accessory dwelling unit changes go far enough. And I think, unless they do, you=re going to have a lot of out-law suites instead of in-law suites because people are going to do it anyway.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Any questions?

VICE CHAIR COHEN: What=s the name of the book? You didn=t mention that.

MR. KADRI: Oh, it=s *Alley Life in Washington* by James Borchert.

Can I give it to you?

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VICE CHAIR COHEN: Sure.

MR. KADRI: I --

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Oh, can I take
it?

CHAIRMAN HOOD: No. No.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: I can=t take it.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: No.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: I can=t take it.

MR. KADRI: It=s a gift.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: No, no, no. I
can=t take it. No, I can=t take it.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: No actually, we
can=t. She=ll do something else and get it but
she can=t, we can=t take gifts.

MR. KADRI: All right. Look for
it on Amazon.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Okay.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Sorry.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Any other
questions? Okay.

All right. Thank you.

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Next.

Oh, let me just make this announcement before Ms. Penn goes. Everyone who is testifying needs to fill out two witness cards. And we ask that you actually do that prior to testimony. We have to have that for the official record. So if you've already testified and have not filled out two witness cards, those witness cards are located to my left to the door, as you come in. Please fill those out and give them to -- who are we giving them to? To Ms. Zee Hill. Raise your hand, Zee. Okay. Because we need that for the official record. Either before -- we'd like to have them before you testify, but if you have not done it, please, make sure you give them to her after you testify. Thank you. You may begin.

MS. PENN: Good morning. My name is Frances Penn. I live at 2805 Franklin Street, Northeast, Washington D.C., in the Woodridge area. My home is bordered by South

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Dakota Avenue and Bladensburg Road Avenue.

First, thank you all so much for being here to hear what some of our concerns are.

I have been living in my home since September 17th, 1976. So I'm a longtime resident. I'm from a small town in South Carolina. And what attracted me to that area, it gave me the southern look. We have big yards we have a lot of trees, and what have you.

However, with the laws the way that they are, the industrial laws, we have lost a lot of the look and what we can do in our area. For example, we have more cab companies on Bladensburg Road I think than they have in the entire Washington area. The parking is atrocious; they park in the neighborhoods; they take up our neighborhoods; and because of the laws we cannot -- we have no recourse and that=s causing for a hostile environment.

Also, in our neighborhood, on one side of the street it=s zoned commercial; on the

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other side of the street, it=s zoned residential. A lot of the residents in that area are really concerned that one day they may come home and they no longer have a house because it is commercial.

We would love to work with the light industrial area because we feel that they bring so much to the area. However, we are inundated by strip clubs; we are inundated by marijuana sites; we have a lot of undesirable areas there that we really would like to see businesses come that=s going to bring something to the neighborhood. So we would love to see, we=re glad the Zoning Commission and the Office of Planning has begun to do something to work with this. Anything we can do to support it, we=re here for you.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

Any questions?

Commissioner May.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

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MS. PENN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MAY: You mentioned that the cab companies are parking in the neighborhood.

MS. PENN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Do you have residential parking permit restrictions in the neighborhood?

MS. PENN: Some of them do and some of them don=t.

COMMISSIONER MAY: And is it a problem of enforcement?

MS. PENN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Or is it a problem --

MS. PENN: That=s a part of it.

COMMISSIONER MAY: That=s part of it?

MS. PENN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes. Okay. So that is something that you can pursue. I don=t know -- I=m not sure who does -- it=s DPW

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that does parking enforcement, so they ought to be --

MS. PENN: can I ask a question?

COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

MS. PENN: When cab companies come into the neighborhood, should they have so many available parking spaces for their business or they don=t have to? In other words, if a cab company and they got a hundred cabs --

COMMISSIONER MAY: Right.

MS. PENN: -- they don=t have parking spaces, is that okay?

COMMISSIONER MAY: I don=t know that we single out cab companies as a use in the zoning regulations. So maybe that is something --

MS. PENN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MAY: -- that we should be looking at, whether there=s excessive parking requirements associated with cab companies.

So the second question I have is,

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you and I think Ms. Ward before you, both mentioned the incoming marijuana --

MS. PENN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MAY: -- growing places --

MS. PENN: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER MAY: -- as an unwelcome use. And it seemed to me that that was actually closer to the light industrial uses that you used to have and that you praised, as opposed to nightclubs.

MS. PENN: I think --

COMMISSIONER MAY: I'm wondering, are there specific impacts associated with places the grow marijuana that concern you and have you experienced that directly?

MS. PENN: Our concern is they're so close to schools. When they first came, they said they would not be within a certain area of schools. We have five of them within a radius of almost four blocks to each other with schools and young children there. That=s

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a big concern for us.

COMMISSIONER MAY: So are these actually dispensaries or just places where it=s grown?

MS. PENN: We have --

COMMISSIONER MAY: I mean, are they selling it?

MS. PENN: -- dispensaries where they are actually --

COMMISSIONER MAY: Yes.

MS. PENN: -- the cultivation centers, yes.

COMMISSIONER MAY: Okay. All right. Thank you.

MS. PENN: Sure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Ms. Penn, you=ll be happy to know, for those who had a concern, one of them just went out of business. One of the cultivation centers just went out of business. So that=s just a note, so the community will be happy about that, I=m sure. Okay.

Again, if you can fill out the

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witness cards prior or make sure we get them afterwards for the official record.

What I'm going to do, I'm going to go away from the sign-in sheet, I'm going to ask for those who would like to testify, we're going to use the front row, for those who would like to testify. So once you have finished, if you could maybe at least move back out of the front row and we will have those who are in the front row to testify. And we will start to my right, your left, and we'll go in that order. So I think everyone else who's left, who would like to testify, come down to the front row.

And again, the Commission really appreciates everyone coming out on a Saturday morning to give us their comments. We really appreciate that. Okay.

We're going to start to my right, your left. Are you ready to begin?

MS. SISOLAK: Yes.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: And remember, unless -- let me just say this -- remember,

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unless you=re an ANC Commissioner and you=ve already testified in front of the Commission, this whole endeavor is to give others an opportunity to hear from others in the city. So if you=re other than an ANC Commissioner, if you=ve already testified, we have your comments, and you can submit additional comments because the record is not going to close until April the 17th. Okay.

You may begin.

MS. SISOLAK: I believe as a representative of an organization I get five minutes? Okay.

My name is Elvira Sisolak. I moved to Capitol Hill in 1967, when I graduated from college. Except for a few years when my husband and I went off to get some schooling, we=ve lived on Capitol Hill continuously. We raised our kids there; our kids went to school there; some of our friends, their kids have come back to Capitol Hill and are now raising their children there. It=s interesting that

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I ride a bicycle to work; I=ve done so for about 35 years. Most of the time, downtown. The last couple of years my office moved to Noma, so it=s closer.

I=m also a representative from Ward 6 to the Pedestrian Advisory Council, which is relevant to some of this. The testimony I=ve given you here is the official testimony of Capitol Hill Village. It was written in November, and no one testified before the Office of Planning regarding this testimony. We just submitted it. At the time our president, whose name is on here, was the person who signed it. I, as a member of the Board and the Chair of the Housing Committee, am therefore, reading this testimony for you.

ACapitol Hill Village is an organization of neighbors established in 2006 to develop the quality of life on Capitol Hill for the long-term. We currently have more than 350 members, mostly senior citizens, and several

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hundred volunteers.@ You can read some of the rest this while I get to the content. AWe have testified on the zoning rewrite previously. We think the current version is much better than the previous version, but we=re still not happy with it.@

Those are you who are familiar with the age-friendly city concept know that one of the major ideas behind that is making the city comfortable and safe for seniors.

One of our concerns with the zoning rewrite is with transportation. Most of us, me excepted obviously, cannot ride bicycles and probably should not try, but the rewrite puts much emphasis on bikes. Also, many of our members have trouble walking; walking to Metro stations and bus stops that are several blocks away is difficult, if not impossible.

However, we have cars, not a lot of cars, generally one car per family. And off street parking on Capitol Hill and other areas of the city has gotten extremely difficult.

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For this reason we think it's really important to have parking minimums in all new residential construction, both low-density and high-density.

We live near Noma, and Southeast and the Southwest areas of D.C., the areas around the ballpark. As you know, these areas have been combined to be in the downtown area. However, they are fundamentally different from downtown as they are just now developing and currently do not have a large stock of underground parking. We're interested in these areas because, as we age, we find that taking care -- excuse me -- of our historic rowhouses and climbing the steps becomes more and more difficult. So we are increasingly considering moving to one level living.

Noma and the ballpark area are prime areas of interest for us. To allow large housing developments with no parking is to say that seniors should stay out.

Another area of concern in the

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zoning rewrite is that of alley dwellings. As you know, Ward 6 has the largest number of properties that may be appropriate for alley dwellings. Under certain circumstances they can be converted. While the rewrite claims that these units provide low-cost housing for seniors, or they will, many of them contain interior stairs. And that=s exactly what seniors do not want. Also, it is likely that these dwellings would not include any parking. So parking spaces would become more limited yet.

Finally, there are currently a large number of substantial -- a substantial number of legal alley dwellings on Capitol Hill. As it says in the testimony, one of our members, that happens to be me, counts five such units in her square alone. People live in our alleys, illegally. Because the rowhouses, and even under the rewrite, it would be illegal. The rowhouses that they=re attached to already have a rental unit in the basement. Some of

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them have more than one. Okay.

Let me just say that smart growth is a catchy phrase and it must not be used as a means to eliminate seniors from our neighborhoods. We are not going anywhere; we pay taxes; some of us still work our kids may be here; we support the schools; we volunteer; we're very valuable members of this community, and you don't want to drive us out. But that would be hard to do because we're not going anywhere.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay.

Commissioners, any questions?

Thank you very much, Mrs. Sisolak, for your testimony. Okay.

Next.

MS. GRASSO: Good morning. My name is Lynn Grasso. And I live 74 W Street, Northwest. And I've provided a written statement and there should be enough for all of you to have a copy.

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As the previous speaker addressed accessory buildings and the use of dwellings and accessory buildings, I would like to do that also.

I'm in support of the proposed zoning changes that would increase the opportunity to use accessory buildings as dwellings units. On our lot, I have a four car garage that was permitted and built in 1922. It has a second story and it is obviously a very limited use to us right now. It holds a lot of junk we don't need, and occasionally, we will use it to park the car if we're going on vacation. But it has the potential to be at least 1000 square feet of light, bright, airy living space. And I can't use it like that under the current proposal. I am frustrated that current zoning, the current zoning ordinance encourages and allows me to develop my basement as housing, but doesn't allow me to use this very valuable space.

I also think that these proposed

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zoning ordinances can help relieve the pressure to put all of the permitted dwelling units at the front of a lot and -- which encourages pop-ups that I think take away from the character of our community.

I have some very specific comments that I've provided to you in detail. One concerns the emergency access, the proposed zoning ordinance requires or allows emergency access through two ways. One, a 24 foot alley that goes from the public street to the building, and the other instance is a 10 foot access to a side yard. I think that there are end units that abut an alley along the side of the lot that offer equivalent, if not greater, access. My lot is an example of this. The alley next to me doesn't meet the 24 foot requirement but it provides access much more generous than the 10 foot requirement permitted as a side yard. And it extends from the public street directly to the rear of my lot. So I've explained that in detail for you.

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Also, I would like to ask that you clarify a provision that limits the use of an accessory building to a dwelling and only parking. Currently, an accessory dwelling -- and accessory building can be used as an artist studio by right under the ARTS Overlay and I would like to see zoning, the zoning ordinance allowed a simultaneous use, like a live/work use for an artist and as a dwelling for habitation. That=s it.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.
Let=s see if we have any questions.

Mr. Turnbull.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Thank you
Mr. chair.

I=m confused. This four car garage you have, is this -- what is the size of the alley that you=re on?

MS. GRASSO: The side alley that --

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Are you on
-- is there two alleys?

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MS. GRASSO: Yes.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Okay.

MS. GRASSO: Yes. My lot is an end of the row lot. I don't have a side yard. My rowhouse and the building directly abut an alley. This alley is less than 24 feet. I would say it's probably about 16 to 16 feet, perhaps 20 feet.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Okay.

MS. GRASSO: Behind the lot, at the back of the lot, the alley is actually much wider and would probably meet the 24 foot requirement. But when it jogs around my lot to the public street, it narrows.

And as currently written, I wouldn't be able to develop this accessory building, by right, because of that. Even though I would -- my lot offers greater access than the access currently envisioned in the proposed regulations. Does that make sense?

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Yes, yes.

And I think --

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MS. GRASSO: It=s very generous access, in fact.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: -- I think maybe what may be worthwhile is for you to meet with the Office of Planning and talk about it. I mean, maybe it=s kind of a special case that hasn=t come to their attention and it might be worth talking about it to them. So.

MS. GRASSO: If I could, I=d like to add that, you know, within a stone=s throw of my house there are probably three units that share the same -- three lots that share the same condition. And if I could throw a stone a half a block, there would probably be three more. So I don=t think it=s a very unusual situation.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Right.

MS. GRASSO: And I point that out in my written testimony --

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Oh --

MS. GRASSO: -- particularly --

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Yes. No, I think, ma=am, maybe, I think -- I=m glad that

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you brought this to our attention. Maybe it=s something the Office of Planning can look at. So I would suggest if you could meet with them later or at some other point make an arrangement to talk about them it, it=s something we can look at.

MS. GRASSO: Certainly, I=m open to any questions too, I=ll make sure my contact information is --

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Okay. --

MS. GRASSO: -- registered.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: Thank you.

MS. GRASSO: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Any other questions?

Thank you very much.

MS. GRASSO: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Appreciate your testimony.

Next.

MS. MCLEAN: Good morning. My name=s Donna McLean. I=m here for myself. I

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live at 308 A Street, Northeast, and my husband
--

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Ms. McLean, let me
just ask you, have we heard from you before?

MS. MCLEAN: Yes. And so -- but at
this BZA hearing that we can only speak about
the alley dwellings. So I had concerns about
the parking so I can just address --

CHAIRMAN HOOD: No, no, what
happens --

MS. MCLEAN: -- because the hearing
before was just simply on that part of the
zoning. It wasn't an open zoning.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Right. Well what
happened was, even though it was just about
alley dwellings, we said if you had additional
topics you could provide us your testimony
within that scope.

MS. MCLEAN: I have a solution.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: The problem is, is
that we've set these regulations and rules --
and this is Saturday morning, believe me, I do

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not want to be confrontational -- we set these rules in place citywide and if I bend now --

MS. MCLEAN: Okay. I understand.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: -- we=re going to bend later and we=re going to -- I would love to hear from you but you --

MS. MCLEAN: Okay. Can I just say that --

CHAIRMAN HOOD: No. No let me just say --

MS. MCLEAN: -- the last paragraph is new?

CHAIRMAN HOOD: No. -- let me just say, we will read your testimony. Believe me, we spend a lot of time reading. When I first started, I didn=t wear glasses. I wear them now. So trust me, we do read and what would be fair to everyone in the city. We have your testimony. Thanks for bringing your testimony down.

MS. MCLEAN: Okay.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay.

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MS. MCLEAN: The new paragraph --

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Thank you for bringing your testimony.

MS. MCLEAN: -- the last one on the first page.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: You're still getting your point in. Thank you.

Next.

MS. WALLACE: Good morning. My name is Karen Wallace. I live on --

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Can you speak into the mic, please?

MS. WALLACE: Sorry. My name is Karen Wallace. I live on the 300 block of A Street, Northeast.

I have lived in and out of the city since 1988. When I moved here I was a 20-something. And currently, I'm married; have two kids. They are the fourth generation living in this house.

We started -- we liked living in the neighborhood because we can walk places. But

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at the same token, when you have families, walking around the city is not an acceptable means of travel most of the time. Grocery shopping increases. When you start having kids, they get older, they go further. Our kids go to public school, however, they do not go to the neighborhood schools. So to get them to school, they use public transportation. However, if there=s other things to do for them, like doctors appointments, you need to have the car to be able to go get them so they don=t miss a lot of school time.

The city has not been set up for public transportation, to get everywhere in the city like other cities do. Most of the places where my kids go, they play soccer, they go out in northern Virginia, they go to Maryland.

The zoning requirements to do away with the minimum requirement for parking would create, if people have cars, more parking on the streets which affect us, because in the area where we live in we have tourists, we have the

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Library of Congress, we have the Capitol, we have churches that come in, parking is at a premium in our area. We also have the alley dwelling issues with people that have garages now that are trying to convert them into housing.

I believe the Zoning Board of the District states that most families have 1.9 cars, and if they create these houses that do not have parking they will create that parking on the street for people that have it, like the senior citizens who have parking or cars that need places to park.

It's great that the District is trying to change the zoning laws and make them more convenient. However, they need to look at all aspects of the city. The Center City has one requirement, Capitol Hill has another, Northwest has another, Anacostia has others, not every place can get to by public transportation or bicycles.

Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you. Commissioners, any other questions? Okay.

And let me just say, Ms. McLean, while I didn't let you speak your last, your new paragraph that you have, I've already looked at it and you're exactly right. That's something that were looking at.

Next. Okay.

MR. SISOLAK: Good morning. My name is Bill Sisolak. As you heard from my wife, we live in the 600 block of A Street, Northeast. We've been here for well over 40 years, raised our family here.

We've served our community in a variety of ways over those years: including my tenure as an ANC 6C Commissioner several years ago. And since that, I've continue to serve as a citizen member on 6C's Planning and Zoning Committee.

Let me stress, I am here as an individual and in no way represent ANC 6C, but

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understand, that through my ANC committee activities I=ve become quite knowledgeable about the ZRR process. In fact, I voted in favor of the latest version when we reviewed it extensively last fall.

However, I did so reluctantly and only because the Office of Planning modified its original misguided plan, which would have effectively exempted major developers from any parking requirements, citywide. While I still object to that exemption of a grossly expanded downtown district, I recognize at least some progress has been made to stop or at least slow down the war on cars that was woven into the fabric of earlier versions of the ZRR under the mantra of smart growth.

There is no doubt that the city is inexorably choking on more cars using our streets and competing for scarce street parking. But that problem will not be solved by our city government creating an atmosphere that says cars are bad and just go ride a

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bicycle. There are large swaths of our population, particularly seniors, for whom riding a bicycle or walking a half mile to stand outside in the cold for a bus is not an option.

Let me go off script here for one second. When I heard a few minutes ago a young man say, "Gee, I hope I'm not driving at 75," well in my 68 years, I've had very good blood pressure, but trust me, it went up a few notches when I heard that one.

And for young families, like you just heard, who have kids that need to be ferried to soccer games and to social events. There are a number of actions that could address on parking problems: you could charge more punitive rates for second or third cars. Do things, as this woman here said, "I've got for parking places; I don't use them." I bet half the garages on Capitol Hill are used for storage and people put their second and third cars out on the street.

I'm here with one simple message.

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Stop the war on cars, get creative about solving our parking problems.

In summary, for those of you who think I take this position because, what, we got two SUVs we ride to work, in our 40 years, we've only had one car; for the last 10 years that car has been a Prius. My wife rides her bike every day to work in the city. She did so yesterday.

Can you give me 30 more seconds because I have a question for each of you? Not to answer here. I'd ask you to talk about this among yourselves. Today, how many of you walked here? How many of you took a bus here? How many of you took the subway here? How many of you rode a bike here? How many of you drove here and parked?

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Do you want us to answer that? I'll start by answering; I drove. But during the week, I catch public transportation.

Anybody else want to comment?

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Okay.

So I want to make sure at least one person answered your question.

Next.

COMMISSIONER MAY: I rode my bike.

MR. SISOLAK: Did you?

CHAIRMAN HOOD: And he rides his bike during the week.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: I car shared with my colleague, and I don't own a car.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Anybody else like to answer?

COMMISSIONER MILLER: I was the colleague that car shared with -- but I normally -- to all the zoning commission hearings that wanted to share, we both Metro, on the red line.

COMMISSIONER TURNBULL: I drove.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. So -- and you know what? That changes. During the week, a lot of us ride bikes, catch public transportation, we drive. So I want to make sure we answer your question. One thing, this

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is a very cooperative zoning commission. So you asked us a question, we're going to give you an answer. Okay.

Next.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Good morning. My name is Joyce Robinson Paul. I'm also an ANC Commissioner for this area where you're located here.

I'd like to know also how many people parked in my precious curbside parking right on this block, because I live on the unit block of N Street. Now that question needs to be answered.

But the key is, I've served as an ANC Commissioner for about 20 years in the District of Columbia.

Now, I'm 65 years old. And I would hate to give up my car because, you know, at 65, though I do not have health problems at this point, we very well could have health problems in the future. And sometimes the car is convenient for a senior citizens.

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Most seniors, live on my block, most of the people on my block has lived there for 30 years. Many of my seniors are -- drive because of necessity. Some of them have had heart attacks; they've had problems with diabetes; high blood pressure; asthma because of the pollution in the area.

And we live in this downtown area of D.C., and we consider your suggestions of, if you, I think it said that, if you live within -- let's see, I have the paper -- if you live within -- where's my paper? Okay. -- if you live within one half mile from the Metro station or one fourth mile from WMATA bus routes that, by right, you can reduce the parking by 50 percent.

We do not need you to take away the precious curbside parking that we have. In this neighborhood, we have -- even though it's the downtown, we consider at the downtown area, we can walk anywhere we want to go downtown -- we have Dunbar; we have Armstrong; we have

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Margaret Washington; we have all types of entities. We have the new federal building one block away. We have all of these buildings that people have decided that, you know, why not come up and park in our precious parking spaces. So we do not need you reducing parking spaces for my seniors. Somehow that has to be worked, a solution has to be worked out for making sure that your rules do not count for seniors who have made the city what it is today, because they've lived here; they pay taxes; and they've paid their way.

The other thing that I'm interested in speaking on is the exclusionary zone. The Exclusionary Zoning Program, which requires that 8 to 10 of new residential spaces are available for affordable housing -- talking to residents, they do not qualify for this exclusionary zoning program, mainly because we're looking at Maryland and Virginia as the AMI for which we talk about the medium income. Now, we're thinking since we're not a state, why

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are we linked in with Maryland and Virginia? We should not be linked with Maryland and Virginia. We should basically be judged by the medium income of the District of Columbia. And that=s getting pretty high also. But I think that if you would take in consideration that we should look at that versus just deciding that since HUD says -- HUD is an institution, you know -- we need to change things so that it meets the needs of the residents of the District of Columbia. So we need to think about certain things like, or solutions like demanding that it is not used from Maryland and Virginia, and since we aren=t a state that we get a special exception to that rule.

And that is my testimony today because I=ve worked with several seniors who have sold their houses in my neighborhood and tried to get in these beautiful condos and beautiful rental units, because they wanted to give up their large housing for smaller space only to find that they don=t qualify for any of

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it.

I have a teacher that I testified about who made almost \$4000 and it was devastating to her to know that she did not qualify for a decent place to live, you know, after she has retired with over 40 years of service for the government and also for the schools.

So we need to really look at what=s happening here.

I know that you have -- the other thing is it=s a thousand page proposal. Give the ANCs, give the neighborhoods the chance to read through these things, to have meetings, to talk to residents.

The only reason I=m back here today is because when I came before you as an ANC Commissioner, I start talking to my residents, I went to civic associations, and found out that, you know, they can=t afford it, a lot of things about the parking is a problem.

Even the low-density housing that

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we live in our neighborhood, we enjoy a neighborhood where we can talk to our neighbors, we can plant flowers, we can work with the neighborhood schools, work with the playgrounds, we do not enjoy a situation where you have planned us to go into these large units, these 10 story units, and we don=t even qualify.

Thank you very much for my testimony and please consider that when you=re thinking about this thousand page zoning rewrite.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you, Commissioner.

Commissioner, what is your ANC?
ANC5?

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: 5E05 which is where Dunbar is located right now.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: 5E05.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Let me just say, I want to -- I really appreciate your comments because exactly what you done is exactly what

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we were trying to achieve. You went out and started talking to your residents about the documents being proposed. And I greatly appreciate that. I'm just hoping other commissioners will do the exact same thing that you're doing, and that's a plus.

Let me just -- something I heard and you kind of counteracted something I've heard and I went through this that you. I mentioned this in another previous hearings about a month or two ago. Some of the seniors drive to their doctor's appointments and, you know, other things of that, the dentist appointment, whatever the appointment they have. And one of the things that was said to me by one of the persons who were advocating public transportation, and using Car2Go, do you think any of your seniors would do away with their cars and start doing car sharing, Car2Go, catch the Metro, wait on a bus to go to a doctor's appointment? I'm just curious.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: I don't think

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so. We live in a neighborhood where it=s changing, but there=s a safety problem, there=s some ability problem, there are health problems, there are just so many different derivatives that you come to at the end of the road. And you want to have a quality of life in the city. You do not want a situation where you have to catch a bus, which may not come for 15 minutes, it=s raining, you get sick.

My dad is 91 years old and I just got him out of the hospital, with pneumonia, because he wants to walk around everywhere. You know, and I=m saying, ADad, just call me, I=ll take you anywhere you want to go.@

So, please, think about the people who have lived in this city all of their lives, have given everything they have to the city, and now we got a zoning rewrite that they=ll never find out about because a lot of them won=t get involved. But that should not happen to our seniors. It should be a beautiful life for the rest of their life.

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CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

Any other questions?

Commissioner Miller?

COMMISSIONER MILLER: Yes.

Commissioner, thank you for the testimony.

I just wanted to repeat the dialogue, some of the dialogue we had last week when you raised the inclusionary zoning issue. We are going to be looking at inclusionary zoning, particularly looking at having deeper affordability levels, in the near future, well, this year.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Yes. Well, thank you very much for that.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Hold tight. We got a lot of questions for you. Hold tight.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER MAY: So, I mean, you mentioned the thousand page document, and talking to your constituents about it. And I'm wondering when that conversation really began for you because, you know, we've heard from many

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people that it=s a lot to digest.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Actually --

COMMISSIONER MAY: And I=m just curious about how recently you actually started these conversations.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Okay. As I said, I=ve been a Commissioner for 20 years, and I just got back in one year ago. So I=m really getting into small area plan, and all of the things that the Office of Planning has come up with in the last year.

However, the thousand page document, I just started reading that. And your staff person, what=s your name?

MS. SCHELLIN: Sharon.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: She=s been great with letting me come to the office, and going on the computer, and just going through that document.

Because a lot of times, you have ANC commissioners that may not have a computer in their home, may not have, may have a breakdown

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computer in their home, may not have all of the things that you need to really study that document. I stayed in her offers for an hour and I think they were about ready to close.

But I'm just saying that, you know, you're asking commissioners to be responsible for reading this document, taking it out into the community, there's just not enough time. We need more time to really digest this.

And things that are wrong with it, let's correct it. What's the hurry? We've waited for this year 2000 plan since a hundred years ago. Exaggeration.

COMMISSIONER MAY: So I mean, yes, the reason I asked this question is that the document was first available, in its full form, I mean there were parts that were being discussed before this, but it's been available now for something like seven months. And I'm just wondering, you know, where the gap has been. Because we've heard from so many people that it's just so much to digest. I know, even

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seven months, it's a lot to digest and talk about but I'm curious about when the conversations actually began and whether they should have, you know, should have done more to inform people --

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: Everything's online.

COMMISSIONER MAY: -- or where the gap was.

MS. ROBINSON PAUL: We live in a city where everything's online. You know, if you don't have adequate computers, if you're not online, if you're not this or you're not that, you lose out. And many of our commissioners, some of them are seniors, some of them are young people who just don't have the tools to get that document and read through it.

I'm still reading through it. And I think a thousand page document, I want in a hundred. Because I'm studying the whole thing, taking out when I need to, and I know parking, it's just a big issue in my

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neighborhood. We've been fighting to make sure that we have adequate parking for the longest time.

And we know that -- as I said, how many of you all parked on my block, you know? And how many of you didn't? How many of you rode the bus? Well good, it's a Saturday morning, it's a beautiful day. I would ride the bus today. You know, or I walk downtown. But, in the coming years, I may not be able to do so. And I want to believe that this city loves seniors too. Okay.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony.

Next.

MR. HUGHES: Okay. Good morning, Zoning Commission. My name is Colin Hughes, and I live at A street and 3rd, Northeast. I'm here to support the proposed relaxation of the parking minimums and the facilitation of ADUs. Although I'm also here to encourage the

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Commission to consider improving the inclusionary zoning for affordable housing so that it is affordable to people of a broader array of income levels.

I'm going to go a little bit off the script as well. I think you've heard from a lot of people like me today already that don't have a car, that are really aware of all the different transportation options that have come online in D.C. these days.

I first moved to D.C. in 2003 and lived in Ward 5. And at the time, I couldn't afford a car, and I wasn't very close to a Metro so I mostly rode the bus, and I rode my bike quite a bit. And I didn't like it, actually, at the time, because there wasn't many safe bike lanes, but that was kind of the option I had.

Now 10 years later, 11 years later, I could actually probably afford a car but the great thing about living in D.C. now is that I don't need to. We have so many more options than what I had when I first moved here. I have

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safe bike lanes for when I want to ride a bike. Transit has improved. And there=s a lot of services where I can get a car or a vehicle when I need one. But I don=t need to sink this investment in a car for my day-to-day, in which I don=t need one because our city is already invested in all these other modes.

I think you=ve heard a lot about that from other people who are in my situation. And I can appreciate that there=s a lot of people who need to drive a car because of a health issue, because of a certain, you know, maybe they=re a salesman or a doctor, they need to get around in a car. I think the smart thing about the proposed relaxation in parking minimums is that it doesn=t -- we=re not actually here to make a choice between seniors or young people, between people who want to drive or people who don=t, the relaxation of the parking minimum leaves this up to the market. If the people of D.C. want parking spot then developers are going to continue to build them

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because developers wanted to sell units, and that=s what the market is going to ask for. But it lets the market decide. It doesn=t say you can=t build parking spots; it doesn=t say you have to get rid of parking spots. That=s not going to happen. In fact, it might still result in more parking spots being built but it=s going to let the market decide. It=s not going to let a 50-year-old law make that decision.

And so I think it will reflect the needs of the residents of D.C., and I think that=s the best way to go here. So everybody in this room, whatever they=re looking for, there=s going to be a market for that, and there=s going to be people providing it.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: All right. Thank you. Any questions? Not seeing any. Thank you very much.

Next.

MR. HUGHES: Thank you.

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MS. MCHALE: Good morning. My name is Lauren McHale. And I live at 913 3rd Street, Northeast.

VICE CHAIR COHEN: Could you talk into the mic?

MS. MCHALE: I'm sorry. Lauren McHale, I live at 913 3rd Street, Northeast. I've lived here for about six years and I'm also a citizen member of the Planning Zoning and Environment Committee of ANC 6C but I'm here to represent myself.

I would like to discuss today the issue of, the regulation to determine height in residential zones. I hear a lot of people say that the issue of pop-ups or extensive rooftop additions are an issue of historic preservation; it's not a zoning issue. I highly disagree with that.

I'm a preservationist by training. And one of the first things you learn is historic preservation is a type of zoning.

This is a much broader issue than historic

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preservation; it's an issue of property use, light and air, fire safety, structural integrity, property value, density, parking, quality of life, and city identity.

The proposed regulation for determining height in residential zones does not go far enough to stop the absurd development that we've been seeing. The proposed regulations may help slightly in height of pop-ups but they will not eliminate them. If the Zoning Commission and the Office of Planning are not willing to eliminate the problem, at the very least, we should have regulations that address the appropriate way to construct a pop-up or roof addition.

The only tool we have to protect our neighborhoods is historic designation. It could take years to secure that designation even if we have a majority of residents in support. We are not Georgetown, or Cleveland Park, or Sheridan Kalorama, but we are equally important to the city and deserve some level of

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protection. If pop-ups and thoughtless tear downs continue at this rate, we will never meet the architectural integrity standards to become a historic district in the future.

The majority of pop-ups are not built by homeowners but by small out-of-town developers looking for a quick buck. Allowing this type of development does not address our city=s affordable housing and density concerns. It benefits only the very few and certainly not long-term residents of this great city.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Thank you very much.

Commissioners, any questions?

Thank you very much. Do we have your testimony?

MS. MCHALE: No, why don=t --

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay. Good.
Thank you.

Is there anyone else who would like

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to testify? I think we got -- okay. You can come forward. Anyone else who would like to testify today? Okay. Unless someone comes in after you, you'll be our last person.

MR. WINNIKE: Okay. Great. I hope it's not the worst one.

So I submitted a testimony online. My name is Chris Winnike, I live at 1825 East Capitol Street.

I'm here to, in general, support the proposals that I've read. I think it's a much-needed improvement in the zoning code.

I want to first just say I moved here a little more than a year ago; I love living here; I think it's amazing that it's so easy to get around without a car. I still have my car. I moved from Alexandria but I almost never use it. Most of my friends don't use their cars. My roommate don't use a car; I let him borrow mine but he never borrows it. And so I think it's so easy to get around without a car these days. I think it's just amazing with the bike

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share and the car shares, and everything. It=s incredible.

But the main reason I think it=s important to reduce the parking minimums is because it=s just we have a critical housing affordability problem in the city. And parking minimums just reduce the total amount of housing that we can build. And it=s just, it=s crazy that we can=t provide enough housing for everybody.

And as long as we limit the housing in the city, the well-to-do are going to take the housing and the poor and the lower incomes are going to be left out. It=s just basic math. You know, the rich are going to get the housing.

That=s just -- I support inclusionary zoning and public housing, and all these things. And I think they=re all really important programs but until we continue to build enough housing for the people that want to live here, we=re not going to -- we=re going to continue to have affordability problem.

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A recently read a study by the ULI, and they surveyed affordable housing developers, and they said the number one thing they found was that they thought parking minimums limited the number of housing, or the amount of affordable housing they can build. That was the most common response when asked what is making it difficult to build affordable housing.

I think that accessory dwelling unit is a great proposal. I think it=s another way to add more housing and more diversity of housing with different people that want different things. So I greatly support that.

I think it=s a little too restrictive now. Like, we=ve already heard people having options that they want to add dwelling units but can=t because of the restrictions. So further loosening those restrictions I think is a help.

And then my last point, which doesn=t really have to do with affordability,

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but the corner store proposal, I really support. I think -- where I live there=s no corner store within walking distance. Or there is one but it=s kind of far and I would definitely support more in the neighborhood. I would love if the proposal also allowed for restaurants in those corner stores because I just think everybody wants restaurants in their neighborhood, and why are we limiting those? So.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Okay.

MR. WINNIKE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Let=s see if we have any questions. Okay. Not seeing any. Thank you very much.

MR. WINNIKE: Okay. Great. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: Is there anyone else who would like to testify? Not seeing anyone, I want to thank everyone for coming out.

And if you all could do us a favor and help us. If you have friends that live in

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other wards, not necessarily 5 and 6 -- well, 5 and 6 was today. Next week, we will start going to the other wards. The wards and the times and places are on the website. I know it=s on the D.C. Office of Zoning=s website and you can call 727-6311 for any questions you have about this process.

I have two quick announcements. And again, you know, it=s about helping us get the word out. You know, we=ve even been to the point that we=ve asked Mike Debonis to help us get the word out. So we=re at that point. We=re trying to reach as many as possible.

Again, first, the Office of Planning will be holding open house in at least two wards east of the river and at least two wards west of the river. Further details will be available on OP=s website in the very near future at planning.dc.gov, and the Office of Zoning will also post a news item on its website at dcoz -- dcoz.dc.gov. I would encourage you to check the websites for further information

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and also call the Office of Zoning to see the next steps of where the Zoning Commission is going, how we're proceeding through this process. Again, it's 202-727-6311. I know Mercedes is probably going to kill me for keep giving that number out, but it's very important, it's important that everyone gets engaged and follows this process.

Second, as a result of the further hearings, the Zoning Commission has decided to leave the record open in this case until Thursday, April the 17th instead of March the 3rd. That allows an additional six weeks to submit written comments.

Ms. Schellin, do we have anything else?

MS. SCHELLIN: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN HOOD: I want to thank everyone. I especially want to thank our staff. I can only remember one time since I've been on the Commission that we went on the road and that wasn't too far, that was the Department

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of Commerce. So I want to thank our staff for putting all this together. Thanks to Office of Planning for joining us. And also thank you all for taking your Saturday to come out and be with us and give us input.

So with that, this hearing is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter was concluded at 10:26 a.m.)

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