

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3B
GLOVER PARK AND CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS



July 12, 2019

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ZC Case No. 19-06 Proposed Voluntary Design Review Text Amendment

Dear Chairman and Commissioners:


Thank you for the invitation to comment on the proposal to adopt a text amendment to revise the language governing the Voluntary Design Review (VDR) process. We appreciate the chance for the public including ANCs to submit their views on the proposed change. The change would allow a property owner or developer to use the VDR process not only to propose a project with innovative design features but also to apply for a project with additional density, by assembling multiple lots and the calculating the project density based on the average Floor Area Ratio for the entire project area, which could allow the matter-of-right density for construction on some parts of the property to exceed what might otherwise be allowed under current zoning.

We learned about this case after the first hearing on May 30, when few witnesses signed up to testify. It is our sense that for more residents and ANCs to assess the merits of this proposal would require more information on how the new language would work in practice, clear definitions of the terms, identification of the zone districts that would be covered by the change (R, RA, RF, MU, or other zones), and additional evaluations of where the new language could be applied and what the change could mean in various neighborhoods and situations.

This is not just a change that would affect one project but it would apply around the entire city, so it would seem advisable to allow time and opportunity for greater participation and fuller deliberation on how the amended language might be used and what the potential effects could be. For that reason, we strongly urge you to hold a second hearing on the proposed change to allow the Zoning Commission to gather more information and perspectives on the text amendment and have more basis for weighing the possible impacts. This should offer the chance for witnesses to assemble and present further evidence on the above questions.

We are hopeful that you will be able to schedule a hearing after the August recess and provide further time for comments so the opportunity for additional residents, ANCs, and community organizations to share their perspectives will not end on August 5. Thank you very much for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Brian Turmail
Chairman

This letter was approved by a vote of 4-0 at a duly noticed public meeting of ANC3B at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five members constitute a quorum.)