Council of the District of Columbia
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1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Brianne K Nadeau
Councilmember, Ward 1

Committee Member
Business, Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
Health and Human Services
Housing and Community Development

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Commissioners

I appreciate the difficult technical work you undertake for the benefit of the District of Columbia and have great respect for your independence and expertise, but would like to share my perspective as a Council representative. Additions, including "pop-ups" and "pop-outs," have been a contentious issue in several neighborhoods of Ward 1. I am very dedicated to affordable housing production and preservation, which can be achieved by increased density, but I do not believe these types of additions properly accomplish that goal The additional units themselves are not affordable to residents with low or moderate incomes, and examination by the DC Office of Planning shows that the increased density that they provide is not bringing down rents, but instead increasing property values and raising rents, home prices and taxes. They also reduce the number of "family-sized" homes, those with three or more bedrooms, which are becoming too rare in the District's housing market. There are already many multi-family and mixed-use housing developments in the pipeline with one or two bedrooms and a large supply of land zoned for that purpose

Further, R-4 is a townhouse zone. Apartments are inconsistent with the character of a townhouse zone, and as such they take away from the neighborhood's sense of place While clearly some apartment buildings were built contemporaneously with the townhouse neighborhoods, and are of similar height and façade, "pop-ups" created by adding extra height or depth to rowhouses are often not as thoughtfully integrated They also can be jarring if located randomly within a block It is appropriate that if someone wants to build an addition inconsistent with the character of the zone – as in any other such case – they should have to apply for a variance Additions that are consistent with the character of a townhouse neighborhood could be determined by design review This would not ban "pop-ups" or "pop-outs," but simply require that they fit the context of the neighborhood. One way to institute design review is through the creation of a preservation district I strongly encourage you to consider preservation districts as a tool to maintain the iconic character of the District's neighborhoods while also allowing thoughtful, reasonable additions.

I support the Office of Planning's proposed text amendments, submitted on June 24, 2014, re: Zoning Commission Case 14-11 I support not only the first three amendments, which relate directly to the "pop-up" issue, but also the fourth amendment. The fourth amendment would

continue to allow the adaptive reuse of larger non-residential buildings, such as schools or churches, by special exception with neighborhood input. These opportunities, as with the Hebrew Home for the Aged at 1125 Spring Road NW, can provide multiple units of affordable housing while preserving neighborhood landmarks
Thank you for your prompt attention to this issue

Sincerely,

Brianne K. Nadeau

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