

June 25, 2012

By Electronic Mail

George R. Clark, Chair
Committee of 100 on the Federal City
945 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

To Mr. Clark:

The Office of Planning is in receipt of your letter dated June 16, 2012 to the Zoning Commission. Once again, we must reject your conclusion and the assertions that you have chosen to try to represent as facts and cite in your letter. Mr. Clark, we have plenty of legitimate concerns and issues to discuss around the zoning update and the future of the city. It is very unfortunate that you chose instead to try to create a controversy where none exists instead of allowing us and your members to have substantive interactions around real issues.

The Office of Planning staff did indeed clearly present the four topics to the Task Force at the June 5, 2012 meeting. Minutes of that meeting are posted on the www.dczoningupdate.org website.

I also have included excerpts from the May 14, 2012 Zoning Commission meeting where OP asked the Zoning Commission for their concurrence about bringing forward several issues in the context of the existing Zoning regulations:

Ms. Steingasser: I would like to talk to you this evening about possibly bringing some items to you in isolation. Some items that we are discovering through our work with the task force and through the work with community groups are important enough that they need a more focused discussion. We are finding that the formatting of the new text in combination with some of these new policy shifts is very confusing and it's creating a whole lot of misinformation.

All the blogospheres grab it, seize it, and it just spins immediately out of control. Some of them we would like to bring forward to you separately in the language of the current code so that people understand it. We would like to discuss the policy shift. We don't think there are that many but we think they are critical and there are some that have made the communities very uncomfortable.

There are some that other communities find very, very desirable. We also want to have certain things in place. We are seeing the market start to warm up and projects are coming loose. There are a lot of these things we would like to have in place.

As you can see, the discussion was clearly about bringing forward multiple items.

Also I have reviewed excerpts from the June 14 Zoning Commission meeting where Ms. Steingasser went over the specific topics she proposed to bring to the Zoning Commission for their concurrence. The Chairman specifically asked Ms. Steingasser if there would be outreach after the four topics were brought to the Commission but before the public hearings and she responded quite directly yes. And of course, all text amendments will be noticed by the Office of Zoning in the same legal format and process that has been used for decades.

The city has many communities with both physical and philosophical interests, many who have very divergent views and wish for the process to continue forward. The Office of Planning has been at more than 48 community meetings on the zoning update, eleven this year, the Office of Planning also conducted 81 public working group meetings on specific topics, and all ANCs received official notice from the Office of Zoning of the 17 public hearings before the Zoning Commission to date. We will continue to reach out to all the various interest groups and work to balance the often conflicting advice and desires of all interested parties and communities in the context of the Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,
Harriet Tregoning
Director

Cc: Mayor Vincent Gray (by electronic copy)
Council Chairman Phil Mendelson (by electronic copy)
Councilmember Tommy Wells (by electronic copy)
Harriet Tregoning, Director Office of Planning (by electronic copy)
Sara Bardin, Director Office of Zoning (by electronic copy)
Zoning Commission through the Office of Zoning (by electronic copy)
Sharon Schellin, Zoning Commission Secretary, DC Office of Zoning

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