



June 12, 2017

Hon. Phil Mendelson
Chair, D.C. City Council
John Wilson Building
Washington, DC

Re: PR22-278, Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
Robert Miller Confirmation Resolution of 2017

Dear Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Committee of the Whole,

The Committee of 100 on the Federal City has known and worked with Robert Miller in various capacities over the past three decades. We respect his deep knowledge of the District's planning and zoning process, especially his understanding of the Comprehensive Plan. As a member of the D.C. Zoning Commission, he is respectful and attentive to the public and has a collegial relationship with other Commission members and with staff. For these reasons, he is well qualified for reconfirmation.

Our enthusiasm is tempered by Mr. Miller's voting record. While he listens courteously to members of the public, including those appearing in opposition to development projects, he rarely finds their arguments sufficiently persuasive to lead him to vote against a project. (This is true of the Commission as a whole.) If opponents never prevail, under any circumstances, the perception necessarily arises that the hearing process is an empty exercise.

Should Mr. Miller be reconfirmed, as we anticipate will be the case, we hope that he will bring his expertise to bear on certain realities:

- "Smart Growth" policies have operated in the District to displace longtime residents;
- stable middle- and working-class neighborhoods are being impacted by adjacent, unbuffered commercial and mixed-use development;
- Small Area Plans and Neighborhood Plans were drafted to provide area or site-specific guidance to general policies in the Comprehensive Plan and are not mere suggestions;

- Mixed-use development projects that come before the Zoning Commission are not resulting in significant numbers of housing units for households below 50 percent of the Area Median Income.

We hope Mr. Miller will recognize the Zoning Commission as a powerful independent body with a broader mission than facilitating economic development. Given his knowledge of the Comprehensive Plan, we hope we will encourage the Commission to give appropriate focus to policies aimed at preserving neighborhood scale and character. Finally, we ask him to remember that the Zoning Commission derives its ultimate authority from the confidence reposed in it by the citizens of the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,



Laura Richards, Chair

C100 Zoning Subcommittee

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