

May 10, 2024
Washington DC

Joel Lawson
Associate Director
DC Office of Planning
1000 4th Street. SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Joel;

We seek an accommodation with the Office of Planning and the Zoning Commission about the proposed rezoning of upper Connecticut Avenue. We believe that a majority of our ANC colleagues and the Zoning Commission are open to a compromise.

We ask for OP's understanding of two factors. There is significant support in Chevy Chase for new housing along the Connecticut Avenue commercial corridor, including new affordable housing. There also is deep concern about the danger of over-development.

There are no magic numbers for building height and density that strike a balance between these factors. OP says 70 feet for all-in height (including penthouses and bonuses) with up to 75 percent lot coverage on the Avenue at large, 80 feet all in and 60 percent coverage at the Community Center-Library site. ANC 3/4G has advanced 60 feet and 60 percent lot coverage everywhere.

We hope to be able to convince a majority our ANC colleagues to split the difference and agree to a 65-foot all-in height limit with OP's current lot occupancy proposals for the Avenue at large (60 percent – residential; 75 percent with IZ+; unlimited for non-residential) and the Community Center-Library site (60 percent).

We encourage OP to join us in taking the long view. In the next dozen years, the entire four-block stretch on the Avenue from Livingston St to the Circle is going to be remade. Even within the limits we propose, there will be hundreds of new housing units, including a minimum of 20% affordable on the Avenue and 30% at the Civic Site. By 2035 or thereabouts, the District, OP included, will have accomplished its goals. And Chevy Chase will have done its part.

Meeting the District's goals can happen with a reasonable degree of community unity or with disunity. The former is possible if we keep development moderate.

We would like to meet with you prior to next Wednesday, May 15th. This is the latest that an ANC meeting could be scheduled to adjust our current position on the rezoning prior to the May 23rd continuation of the Zoning Commission hearing.

At a minimum, our hope is that OP would be willing to tell the Zoning Commission that our compromise proposal is not inconsistent with the District's Comprehensive Plan. Ideally, OP and the ANC would agree to jointly support our proposed adjustment.

The timing is right. We hope we can secure your support and that of your agency.

Sincerely,