

Council for the District of Columbia: Committee of the Whole: June 27, 2019

PR 23-285 - Zoning Commission Peter Shapiro Confirmation Resolution of 2019

Testimony from Meghan Hottel-Cox, Associate Goulston & Storrs

Good afternoon Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Council. My name is Meghan Hottel-Cox, and I am an Associate at Goulston and Storrs. I am truly pleased to be here this afternoon on behalf of Goulston and Storrs to offer our strong and unqualified support for the appointment of Peter Shapiro to the Zoning Commission. We are thankful that Mr. Shapiro is seeking to extend his history of service to the citizens of the District of Columbia by continuing to serve in this very important position.

For almost three years, Mr. Shapiro has adamantly served the best interests of the District of Columbia through knowledgeable, fair, evenhanded, and diligent evaluation of zoning and planning issues at the Zoning Commission. Mr. Shapiro has consistently championed issues of critical importance, including commitments to high levels of sustainability, the delivery of affordable housing, and community outreach and agreement. Mr. Shapiro's exemplary service is unsurprising, given that his experience as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner provided him

with an extensive understanding of and an important perspective on the issues that he has been called upon to address at the Zoning Commission. We believe that Mr. Shapiro's community-oriented experience and his history of service to the District continue to make him an ideal candidate to serve on the Zoning Commission.

I would like to take a minute to focus on three particular areas in which Mr. Shapiro has led the Commission:

- 1) Sustainability. Mr. Shapiro has been a fierce and tireless advocate for sustainability in each and every District development. He has pushed every Applicant to ensure that the project provides meaningful and significant commitments to the environment. He consistently presses applicants to first provide alternative energy, then increase these commitments to alternative energy, and to create truly sustainable projects. He is almost single-handedly responsible for the fact that virtually every Planned Unit Development now includes solar panels. He has also been a driving force in encouraging fellow Commissioners to take cutting-edge approaches to sustainability issues they consider. These efforts have resulted increased

sustainability and resiliency of District development that will serve the community for years to come.

- 2) Community Input. Because of his previous experience as an ANC Commissioner, Mr. Shapiro is particularly attentive to the vital role that the communities, particularly the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, play in all applications and petitions that come before the Commission. He is one of the first Commissioners to raise community issues and to routinely require applicants to return to discuss these issues with the ANCs prior to the Commission moving forward.

- 3) Balancing Competing Interests. It is unsurprising that many zoning cases can bring a variety of competing, and sometimes conflicting, parties and stakeholders to the fore. Mr. Shapiro carefully considers all points of view and ensures that issues and concerns are fully addressed, in a meaningful and enforceable way, before making any decision. Much like the Chair of the Commission, Mr. Shapiro also pushes the parties to work collegially and cooperatively to resolve their issues themselves. This is critical, because that dialogue and resolution often results in long-term mutual collective

action by the parties as neighbors and peers, which is far more effective at addressing the types of concerns that arise in the land use and zoning world.

The citizens of the District will clearly be very well served with his re-appointment to the Zoning Commission. Thank you for your consideration.