

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ZONING COMMISSION



Public Roundtable on
PR23-285, the “Zoning Commission Peter Shapiro Confirmation
Resolution of 2019”

Testimony of
Peter Shapiro

Before the
Committee of the Whole
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building
Room 412
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

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12:30 pm



Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. My name is Peter Shapiro and I am honored to have been nominated by Mayor Bowser to be re-appointed to the Zoning Commission. I thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today to discuss my qualifications and experiences and affirm my commitment to serve the District of Columbia on this important body. If reconfirmed, I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure the mission of the Zoning Commission is executed in a manner consistent with the organization's charge.

Let me start by telling you a little about myself. I grew up in Washington, D.C. and have lived in the National Capital region for most of my life. I moved back to Washington, D.C. 10 years ago and currently reside in Spring Valley. I was an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in Chevy Chase from 2014 to 2016, representing SMD 3/4G05. As a Commissioner, I understood and was committed to engaging constituents to, as the ANC mission says, bring government closer to the people, and people closer to the government.

I am proud to have received a number of awards and recognition for community leadership including the Public Leadership Award from the Center for Non-Profit Advancement, and I have helped found and/or serve on the board of over a dozen community-oriented non-profits in D.C. and Maryland, including the Latin American Youth Center, Community Forklift, Friends of Rhode Island Avenue, DC Advocates for the Arts, and the Non-Profit Roundtable of Greater Washington.

Currently, I am the Director of the Revenue Authority of Prince George's County, which is the county's development finance agency and parking authority.

In my past 2 ½ years of service on the Zoning Commission, I feel that I have demonstrated the experience and temperament to continue to serve effectively. I believe that I was able to hit the ground running, in part because I was able to build on my years of service on the Prince George's County Council, including two years as Chair. The County Council sits as the District Council, the quasi-judicial final arbiter on land use and zoning decisions, a role quite similar to that of the Zoning Commission. In that capacity I considered hundreds of conceptual and detailed site plans, special exceptions, variances, and the like for Prince George's County. In addition, as Chair, I led the County Council through the process of developing and adopting the General Plan for the County, the equivalent of the DC Comprehensive Plan. Through these experiences, I have developed expertise on many of the issues that face the Zoning Commission.



Pursuant to the DC Official Code, the role of the Zoning Commission is to act as the quasi-judicial body charged with preparing, adopting and amending the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map in a means consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Simply, I continue to believe the primary purpose of the Zoning Commission is to preserve and enhance the quality of life of DC residents by effectively regulating the built environment. As a commissioner, I make decisions based on the evidence presented, and as stated earlier, use the Comprehensive Plan as my guide. It is my nature and professional experience to begin with consensus building, and as such frequently engage in robust deliberations with my fellow commissioners on matters before the Commission.

As commissioner, I have been, and will continue to be diligent in my commitment to the current and future health and welfare of the residents of the District of Columbia, while recognizing our unique status as the Nation's Capital. Therefore, I am equally committed to ensuring that new development is of the highest quality design, enhancing our image locally, nationally and internationally.

In summary, I believe that high quality, socially responsible and environmentally sensitive development is critical to accomplishing these goals. The Zoning Commission is central to achieving these goals. If reconfirmed, I look forward to working with the staff in the Office of Zoning to quickly get up to speed and immediately get to work.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

