



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2F
Government of the District of Columbia
5 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 667-0052 Fax: (202) 667-0053 www.anc2f.org

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Writer's direct contact:

Charles Reed
creed@kgrrmlaw.com
Tel: (202) 262-5030
1310 Q Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

September 26, 2009

Ms. Harriet Tregoning
Director, DC Office of Planning
Frank D. Reeves Municipal Center
2000 14th Street, NW
4th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Re: DC Zoning Review: Uptown Arts (“ARTS”) Overlay District

Dear Ms. Tregoning:

As you will recall, I wrote you on May 28 requesting that the Uptown ARTS District community be given adequate and reasonable opportunity to provide input on the future zoning of this district. As reflected in your letter of June 1, we agreed that by September 7 (later extended by your staff to September 26) that we would provide our views on this important aspect of the citywide Zoning Review process. This letter and the accompanying recommendations constitute the considered views of our community.

At a duly called public meeting on September 2, 2009, and with a quorum present and acting throughout, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2F (“ANC 2F”) voted unanimously (4-0) to endorse the attached zoning recommendations of the ANC 2F ARTS Overlay Review Committee (“the ARTS Committee” or “the Committee”) and to advise the Office of Planning and Zoning Commission to implement the recommendations as soon as possible.

The ARTS Committee’s report and recommendations are the consensus product of an unprecedented process of collaboration that has encompassed 130 participants, three ANCs, three major neighborhood associations, the MidCity Business Association, and the MidCity Artists Group, all of which organizations voted to endorse the Committee’s recommendations. (Letters of support from many of these organizations are included in the appendices to the attached report) and urge their adoption.

The Committee held eight duly called public meetings in June and July in which interested organizations and individuals (as well as members of the public) were encouraged to participate to discuss the zoning issues affecting our Arts District. Committee members then participated in nine additional duly called public meetings during August and September at which the Committee’s zoning recommendations were presented and discussed. Participants in

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this outreach process came from all backgrounds: community leaders; artists; theater and gallery owners; individual residents; retailers and other business owners; restaurateurs; bar and club owners; developers; DC government officials; independent planning and zoning experts; and many property owners located throughout the 14th and U Streets' corridors. The Committee itself comprised local residents, a local artist and developer, a local restaurateur, and the owner of local service and retail businesses.

ANC 2F, alongside the other organizations involved, commends the ARTS Committee's zoning recommendations to the Office of Planning ("OP") and the Zoning Commission, and *urges both OP and the Zoning Commission to act quickly to embrace and adopt these recommendations, which we believe are critical to the future success of the Uptown ARTS Overlay District.*

As the attached report indicates, the Uptown ARTS Overlay District is currently at serious risk of losing many of its arts and retail uses. The current ARTS Overlay regulations have been ineffective in incentivizing arts uses, and both arts and retail uses are currently being priced out of this district by restaurant and bars. While restaurants and bars play an important role in promoting nighttime foot traffic in arts districts (and, many times, in partnering with arts uses), restaurants and bars often impair daytime foot traffic (which many arts and retail uses require to survive) and drive up rents. Thus, use limitations on restaurants and bars play an essential role in ensuring development of a vibrant and balanced (arts/retail/restaurants) arts district.

You will see from the attached report that there are *three areas in which the community believes that urgent action is required:*

- The issuance of a revised "Arts & Culture" Guidance Note by the Zoning Commission to reflect that body's consideration of the recommendations contained in this report, so that the further Zoning Review work on the Arts & Culture subject area reflects the needs of the Uptown Arts District.
- A text amendment to enable enforcement of the proposed new limit (40-50%) on the frontage of eating and drinking uses to begin in early 2010 in the Uptown Arts District.
- A text amendment to restrict ground floor uses such as banks and pharmacies that do not contribute to a vibrant streetscape in the Uptown Arts District.

It is essential in our view to build quickly upon the momentum that the ARTS Committee has established. To this end, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in mid-October to discuss next steps on these three issues and other issues raised in the report. (Dr. Joan Ferraris, who is copied below, is empowered on behalf of the Committee to schedule at a mutually convenient time.)

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Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for your staff's assistance to the ARTS Committee throughout this community-based planning and zoning project. Both Messrs Parker and Giulioni (as well as other OP staff members) have been most generous with their time, expertise and support over the past four months.

We respectfully note that the action of our ANC referred to at the outset is a formal action and, as such, is entitled to be accorded "great weight" under the Advisory Neighborhood Commission Act, DC Code §1-309.10.

Sincerely yours,



Charles D. Reed
Chairman, ANC 2F

Attachment

cc: Honorable Jack Evans, Ward 2 Councilmember
Honorable Jim Graham, Ward 1 Councilmember
Mr. Anthony Hood, Chairman, DC Zoning Commission

Via Email Only:

Ms. Brianne Nadeau, Chair, ANC1B
Mr. Mike Silverstein, Chair, ANC2B
Mr. Travis Parker, DC Office of Planning
Mr. Michael Giulioni, DC Office of Planning
Ms. Andrea Doughty, Chair, ANC2F ARTS Overlay Review Committee

Dr. Joan Ferraris, Scheduler, ANC2F ARTS Overlay Review Committee
(Email: jdferraris@yahoo.com; tel: 301.396.1559)