

Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR

From: Charles Pool <charles_pool@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 10:37 AM
To: Roakes, Raymond A. - PDR
Subject: Opposition to UDC 2024-06

Dear Mr. Roakes,

Please convey to the entire Urban Design Committee (UDC) my strong opposition to UDC 2024-06 on the February 8, 2024 UDC agenda. This resolution proposes to remove UDC review from zoning setbacks and allow staff to grant exceptions to the zoning code.

According to the Resolution attached to UDC 2024-06, setbacks of up to 10 feet or 1000 square feet are determined to be “**minor**” setbacks. This is an absurd interpretation of the zoning code. A 10-foot setback is not “**minor**,” and in most cases is an extremely essential function of the zoning code. For example, in many city zoning districts only a 6-foot setback is required between a home and the side building lot-line. A 10-foot setback should be considered no more of a “**minor**” exemption to the zoning code than would an exemption for a 10-foot extension to building height restrictions.

Giving staff the authority to usurp UDC review regarding required zoning set-backs will promote the appearance of favoritism in the administration of the zoning code. For example, if a wealthy donor to the Mayor’s political campaign requests a setback exemption, the exemption will most likely be approved. Allowing the staff to grant exemptions to zoning rules may result in costly litigation for the city because anyone denied an exemption by the staff can rightly allege favoritism in the administration of the zoning code.

Most importantly, why should the UDC members willing vote to give up their authority to review a vital feature of the zoning code? The agenda docket does not appear to be flooded with 10-foot setback cases. This would set an extremely bad precedent for ceding UDC authority.

Thank you for your consideration of my opposition to UDC 2024-06.

Sincerely,

Charles Pool
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Richmond, VA 23220