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About the Kenesaw balconies

Resolved, that ANC 1D advises the Mayor’s Agent to approve H.P.A. 21-219, an application for the removal of balconies from 3060 16th Street NW, due to the onerous and excessive financial burden the restoration would impose on numerous low- and moderate-income owners.

Why: 3060 16th Street NW is a historically significant example of mixed-income housing that is now under threat as a direct result of the onerous economic burden associated with repairing ornamental balconies.

In the 1970s, at risk of losing their aging building, tenants of the Kenesaw formed a 23-unit co-op; the co-op then purchased the building and created a 99-unit market rate condominium association to help offset costs. This is an early model of mixed-income housing and one of DC’s first successful TOPA projects. Financing from DC government made this mixed-income housing model possible.

Today, approximately 14 families who reside in the building have incomes below 30% of AMI, a threshold that indicates very low income, and a greater number are low- to moderate-income. The pandemic has heightened the financial insecurity of many of these families.

3060 16th St NW is an aging property, and residents are already balancing the cost of a few structurally necessary, extremely expensive repairs. That precarious balance may be upset because of costly ornamental balconies that play no role in the structural soundness or safety of the building.

Over the last year that this process has unfolded, costs have increased due to supply chain issues. While restoration is estimated to cost \$1.5 million, balcony removal cuts that cost in half to an estimated \$750,000.

In the absence of this reduction in costs, many of these residents will be unable to afford their share of the repairs and may lose their homes. The most straightforward way to reduce costs is to permit the removal, rather than restoration, of ornamental balconies.

While ANC 1D appreciates the historic architectural character of Mount Pleasant, the commission

believes the well-being of residents who call this neighborhood home must come first. ANC 1D urges the Mayor's Agent to recognize the onerous and excessive financial burden that balcony restoration imposes.

Prioritizing balconies over people would undermine both DC government's own investment in establishing this mixed-income housing model and Mayor Bowser's stated goals related to affordable housing preservation. Most importantly, should the Mayor's Agent vote against this application, real people are one step closer to losing their homes.

Commissioner Allinger is selected to represent ANC1D at the Mayor's Agent hearing.

Resolution passed, 3 to 0 vote, at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANC1D on November 16, 2021, with a quorum present. Voting "yes": Commissioners Allinger, McKay, Sandenburgh. A quorum for this commission is three; three commissioners were present.