

# West End Citizens Association

## Washington, D.C.

Boundaries: 15th Street on the East • Potomac Park on the South  
Rock Creek and the Potomac on the West • N Street on the North

2011 23 PM 2:28

March 23, 2011

Mr. Jamison L. Weinbaum  
Director, Office of Zoning  
441-4th Street, N.W. - Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: WECA's Response to 3/1/11 DDOT Memo - Zoning Commission Case No. 06-11A/06-12A (GWU - Foggy Bottom Campus: 2<sup>nd</sup>-Stage PUD - Square 103)

Dear Mr. Weinbaum:

This letter provides the response by the West End Citizens Association (WECA) to the DC Department of Transportation's (DDOT) March 1, 2011 memorandum to you (which the WECA received late on March 2<sup>nd</sup>) on Zoning Commission Case No. 06-11A/06-12A (The George Washington University (GWU) - Foggy Bottom Campus: 2<sup>nd</sup>-Stage PUD, 1<sup>st</sup>-State PUD Modification, and Further Processing of an Approved Campus Plan for Multiple Lots in Square 103). In its March 2<sup>nd</sup> Response to GWU's February 22<sup>nd</sup> Post-Hearing Statement, the WECA requested an opportunity to respond to DDOT's then-not-yet-received submission. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the Commission so granted the WECA's request, asking for a response by March 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Authorized Site Visit

First, the Commission received incorrect information<sup>1</sup> about the WECA's dealings with DDOT. On January 20, 2011, the WECA and GWU met with DDOT/Chris Delfs (representing Karina Ricks) and Gabriela Vega (i.e., not also Jeff Jennings) to discuss both the Square 103 and Square 55 proposals. Mr. Delfs asked the WECA to add to its DDOT January 21<sup>st</sup> site visit, which was originally intended to review GWU's Streetscape proposal (including for Squares 103, 55 and 39), also a site visit to Square 103. As a consequence, two WECA Board Members conducted a site visit with DDOT/Lewis Booker of all three Squares. He provided multiple insights which the WECA had hoped would be included in DDOT's oral testimony at the February 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing (but DDOT did not attend) or its written report (which would not be subject to the WECA's cross examination).

For example, DDOT noted: (a) segmented benches are now DDOT's norm, i.e., GWU's proposal is inconsistent; (b) GWU's current brick sidewalks are unsafe; (c) obstructed views at 21<sup>st</sup> and the Square 103 alley both South by the rowhouse which is situated close to the sidewalk and to the North by the multiple parked cars; (d) utility poles, Fire Department standpipes, etc. in the alley which would need to be relocated; and (e) the eventual conflict in the Square 103 alley with GWU vehicles and delivery trucks servicing the GWU buildings (including GWU's central mailroom), which front on F Street.

<sup>1</sup> The incorrect information is in DDOT's report (p. 3) and GWU's March 8<sup>th</sup> Proposed Findings of Fact #67.

### DDOT's Report

In its March 2, 2011 Response to GWU's Post-Hearing Statement, the WECA requested that GWU additionally examine Option #4<sup>2</sup>: 1-way alley ingress and egress with traffic entering 20<sup>th</sup> Street (which would be consistent with most rush hour traffic) and exiting on 21<sup>st</sup> Street (which would also be consistent with most rush hour traffic). Nonetheless, without such an examination in hand, DDOT objected to Option #4. In fact, Option #4 would avoid most of the circuitous traffic to which DDOT objected.

DDOT's logic is flawed or inconsistent in multiple respects. For example, the WECA cannot understand why DDOT approved the mid-block garage and truck entrance on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street for the large Square 54 Planned Unit Development (PUD) as well as the mid-block garage entrance on H Street and the mid-block truck entrance on I Street for the large Square 55 PUD. If these mid-block entrances are safe for pedestrians, why wouldn't a similar mid-block entrance on G Street (Option #2) be safe for Square 103, especially since DDOT admitted that there is less vehicular and pedestrian traffic on G Street than on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets?

With respect to Option #2 (G Street), DDOT stated, "The vehicle will need to wait for pedestrians to clear the crosswalk and intersection to complete the turn from 20<sup>th</sup> Street to one-way G Street. Once the vehicle turn has been completed, the vehicle driver will need to cautiously begin their turn into the G Street parking garage driveway. The turning action means the driver will need to ensure the driveway is free of all oncoming pedestrians and cyclists on the sidewalk" (p. 2). In addition, DDOT stated, "Furthermore, the G Street curb cut is unsafe because vehicle drivers will dart out of the parking garage exit on to G Street with little restraint or caution" (p. 2). Using DDOT's logic, how can the Square 54 and Square 55 traffic patterns be safe for pedestrians? And, why wouldn't the same logic apply to Options #1, #3 and 4?

With respect to Option #3 and #4 (1-way alley), DDOT states, "With the parking garage egress location, a driver could travel in the proposed one-way alley to gain enough momentum to cause a significant amount of injury to any number of people and massive property damage" (p. 2). Using DDOT's logic, how can the one-way (on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street) Square 54 and one-way (on H and I Streets) Square 55 traffic patterns be safe?

With respect to the section captioned "Traffic Control in the Alley," DDOT states, "The markings and signs will significantly assist with maintaining the pedestrian right of way." If so, why couldn't similar markings and signs be used for Option #2 (G Street) to make them as safe?

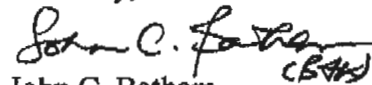
In sum, the WECA continues to believe that Option #2 (G Street) is most appropriate and desirable, especially for pedestrian safety, but that Option #4 (1-way alley Westbound) would be the second most desirable. Also, the WECA continues to oppose Option #1 (2-way alley) as the least desirable and least safe option.

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<sup>2</sup>The four Options include: #1 2-way alley, #2 G Street, #3 1-way alley Eastbound (entering on 21<sup>st</sup> and exiting on 20<sup>th</sup>), and #4 1-way alley Westbound (entering on 20<sup>th</sup> and exiting on 21<sup>st</sup>).

If any additional information is needed, Barbara Kahlow can be reached during the day on (202) 965-1083.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Batham". To the right of the signature, the initials "CBH" are written in a smaller, more stylized script.

John C. Batham  
President

cc David Avitabile for GWU  
Jeff Jennings for DDOT  
Arlova Jackson for OP  
Rebecca Coder for ANC-2A



## A facsimile from

**Barbara F. Kahlow**

965-1083  
(for the WECA)

**To:** Office of Zoning  
Attn. Sharon Schellin  
Fax number: 727-6072

**Date:** 3/23/2011  
**Pages:** Cover + 3

**Regarding:** WECA's Response to 3/1/11 DDOT Memo - ZC No. 06-11A/06-12A  
(GWU's Square 103)

**Comments:**

Please confirm receipt. Thank you.

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