

4/5/12 Testimony of Barbara Kahlow
on Zoning Commission Case No. 06-11F/06-12F
GWU's Foggy Bottom Campus Plan: 2nd-Stage PUD (Museum) in Square 102

I, Barbara Kahlow, live at 800 25th Street, N.W. I am testifying on behalf of the West End Citizens Association (WECA), the oldest citizens organization in the Foggy Bottom-West End area. One of the WECA's goals is maintaining the quality of life for the residential community in Foggy Bottom-West End.

On February 6, 2012, the WECA requested "Party" status for this Square 102 case (ZC No. 06-11F/06-12F). On September 14, 2006, the Commission granted the WECA Party status for the George Washington University (GWU) Foggy Bottom Campus Plan/Omnibus Planned Unit Development (PUD)¹ case.

The Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC-2A) submitted a March 27, 2012 letter to the Commission stating, "**ANC 2A takes no position.**" Therefore, the WECA will be representing the immediately affected community, as we indicated that we planned to do at the March 21st ANC meeting.

Today, I will focus preliminary on safety -- of pedestrians, those exiting vehicles coming to the Square 102 museum property, and vehicular traffic using 21st. First, I will describe the unusual nature of this proposed site. 21st Street is a heavily trafficked (especially in the PM rush) one-way street going South. The museum would be on the East side of 21st Street. GWU is proposing a new curb-cut on 21st Street between G and H Streets and the removal of five parking spaces on 21st Street for two drop-off and pick-up areas of 40' (including the curb-cut) and 53' (including the entrance).

Artifact Vehicles

The intent is for artifact and exhibit deliveries (in and out) to be made by use of the proposed new curb-cut, which would cross a sidewalk that is heavily used by GWU students, community residents, employees working in the area, and visitors. Each artifact/exhibit delivery vehicle would do back-in loading, thus tying up 21st Street vehicular traffic during this time-consuming movement. That is why GWU has agreed to restrict artifact/exhibit deliveries to not occur during the AM or PM rush, i.e., not 7 AM - 9 AM or 4 PM - 7 PM. The back-in loading would also temporarily close the heavily used sidewalk, causing pedestrians to wait or walk into the street, which would be dangerous.

Non-artifact Vehicles

Non-artifact deliveries -- including (a) buses of students, seniors, tourists, or others and (b) delivery trucks, including for catering and equipment or FedEx/UPS-type deliveries, and trash trucks -- would not be allowed to use the new curb-cut loading dock but instead could use the 40' and 53' areas where there are now 5 parking spaces. There would be

¹ On September 28, 2006, the WECA testified in opposition to GWU's proposed 20-Square "Omnibus" PUD, which was never envisioned in DC's zoning rules governing PUDs or those governing Campus Plans

no partial or full layby along the East side of 21st Street. Therefore, since most passengers exit on the right side of a vehicle, including all bus passengers, they would be exiting directly into the 21st Street vehicular traffic lanes. This would be a danger to all of them as well as to the vehicular traffic. The WECA requested GWU to move all of this traffic to the less-travelled G Street around the corner. Reluctantly, GWU finally agreed to ask (but not enforce) only buses to use G Street. GWU's application states that GWU would be restoring some or all of these 4 parking spaces on G Street but these spaces will be used for the buses. So, in fact, there would not be a net loss of only 1 parking space, as GW's application claims

The Commission should note the following information in GWU's project filing.

- "The student groups will arrive in a school bus and typically take approximately 30 minutes to load and unload students. The adult/senior groups typically arrive in a 30-seat mini-coach bus and take approximately 40 minutes to load and unload" (Tab H, p 4, 11/2/11 Application)
- 196 - 232 anticipated annual deliveries (Tab H, p 3, 11/2/11 Application)
- The absence of any Level of Service (LOS) data for 21st Street, 21st and G, and 21st and H Streets (see Tab H, 11/2/11 Application & Tab A, 3/15/12 Pre-Hearing Statement)

The WECA recommends that the Commission request traditional LOS data to assess the adverse impact of this Application.

Emergency Vehicles

Fire Department Engine 23, located at 2219 G Street (i.e., around the corner from the Square 102 site), regularly uses 21st Street for emergencies. Attached is a copy of a February 16, 2012 e-mail from Engine 23 Captain Alan Skursky to FEMS Captain Tony Falwell stating,

Hey Capt. I understand that a proposal has been submitted for a loading dock to be installed in the rear of the building on the corner 21 St and G St NW . Case No. 06-11F/06-12F I just wanted to express our concern with this loading dock being installed on 21 St. It is a very narrow street and there may be potential for trucks blocking 21 street. This is our primary running route when we respond north east of the firehouse ...

From day 1, the WECA has questioned the appropriateness of the East side of 21st Street for a museum needing a new curb-cut. We continue to think that GWU should have located the museum on another of the 16 development sites in the 20-year campus plan. The bottom line is the WECA's disagreement with multiple statements in GWU's filings. For example:

- "without posing an adverse risk to vehicular and pedestrian traffic" (p. 4, 3/15/12 Pre-Hearing Statement)

- “The design of the curb cut and loading area will not be objectionable” (p 3, 3/15/12 Pre-Hearing Statement)
- “The proposed Project will promote pedestrian safety” (p. 27, 11/2/11 Application)
- “the proposed service entrance will not have an adverse impact on pedestrian or vehicular traffic” (p. 27, 11/2/11 Application)

In addition, the WECA questions how GWU plans to construct the new museum. Will it use heavily-travelled 21st Street at all? If so, where do DDOT and GWU propose to relocate the heavy PM rush hour traffic?

Thank you for your consideration of the WECA’s views.

Attachment

From: Chisholm, Joseph N. (FEMS) [mailto:joseph.chisholm@dc.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 12:44 PM
To: barbara.kahlow@verizon.net
Subject: FW: Loading dock @ 21 St and G St NW

This is the letter that Captain Skursky sent to Captain Falwell at Fire Inspections Office.

From: Skursky, Alan (FEMS)
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 10:06 AM
To: Falwell, Tony (FEMS)
Cc: Chisholm, Joseph N. (FEMS)
Subject: Loading dock @ 21 St and G St NW

Hey Capt. I understand that a proposal has been submitted for a loading dock to be installed in the rear of the building on the corner 21 St and G St NW . Case No. 06-11F/06-12F (SW corner of Square 102). I just wanted to express our concern with this loading dock being installed on 21 St. It is a very narrow street and there may be potential for trucks blocking 21 street. This is our primary running route when we respond north east of the firehouse. Thanks for your time.

Alan Skursky
Captain
Engine 23 #1
202-673-3223

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"Putting District Residents Back to Work – One Hire at a Time"
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