

Madam Chairperson, Commissioners, good evening. My name is Scott McDermott Cartwright, and I have lived in Adams-Morgan for coming on **eight years** now. In all that time, I have never once opposed any new growth or development in the neighborhood I love. Not for Harris Teeter, or the new Kalorama Apartments, or any of the new building efforts over all that time. Indeed I have consistently actively supported such growth – often to the chagrin of my neighbors – even when it was inconvenient or even distasteful to me personally, because I believe that my personal preference or convenience does not trump others' desires to build and profit and enjoy.

This petition, however, changes that. For the first time I have signed my name in opposition. For the first time I come down here, **two evenings** leaving early from work, sharing these four hours and counting with you, to implore you to hold the Dorchester House to the same rules that everyone else plays by. **My wife** – represented here by this T-shirt, and whose written testimony I would like to offer into evidence – also has never stood opposed to Adams Morgan development, but does so now, and did so in person at our last meeting despite a cold and no dinner. That's how important this is.

The Height Act says, quite clearly, and I contend with no one in this room seriously questioning, that a building higher than fifty feet on a road such as 17th Street is oppressive, is unsightly, is inappropriate, and is detrimental. **It simply is.** The framers of the Height Act took their time, in the cool light of day, to consider what was appropriate and beneficial and what was crushing and bad. And the results of their analysis are not in question; 50 feet is appropriate, higher is damaging to the area.

Does the Height Act have exceptions? Certainly; **even law must bow to physics**, and the Height Act recognizes that the Washington Post building cannot have a different height on L Street than it does on 15th. **This, isn't that.** You know it isn't.

I am here to give testimony so let me offer some facts of my own knowledge into the record. The first I have already done: that here for the very first time I speak in opposition, instead of in support, of new development. The second fact is this: **we do not live on the sidewalk.** These lovely sightline diagrams are quite frankly irrelevant to the actual lives of the actual people in the neighborhood. My back door, out of which I pass each day, is a full story above 17th Street. My view of this proposed new building will not be just of its 70-plus foot massiveness, but of its full 90-foot monstrousness. And so will be the view of my neighbors on either side. And their neighbors on either side. And our neighbors in the Morgan Annex. And our neighbors further down 17th Street. And our neighbors in the Euclid Mews. And so on.

The third fact I offer into evidence is this: we have tried this experiment before, and it failed. There is a house on Ontario Road which attempts this same feat – looking only somewhat enormous from street level, then rising quote-invisibly-unquote further back. And indeed from the sidewalk immediately around the building, it looks simply “quite tall”. From everywhere else in the neighborhood, its extra height is completely visible, apparent and abhorrent, **rising like a Beluga whale** intent on devouring the neighborhood. When this rezoning was under consideration I argued with my neighbors that we should give the developers the benefit of the doubt, maybe it won't be bad. Commissioners, there is no doubt any more. This approach does not work.

I conclude by speaking to this Commission as what it is: rational, reasoned, careful human beings in application of the law. The law is not meant to be applied by computers, but by people who can think, and know that this building is exactly what the Height Act was written to prevent. I welcome whatever 50-foot-tall structure these gentlemen see fit to create on this lot, and wish them all profit and success.

ZONING COMMISSION
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EXHIBIT No. 117
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