

2500 Virginia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037
September 16, 2006

Carol Mitten, Chair
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 - 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-11
EXHIBIT NO. 95

RE: File #s 0611 and 0612

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I ask that you file this statement as a part of the record in the file numbers cited above.

I am the Second Vice President of Watergate East, Incorporated, as well as the Immediate Past President of the Foggy Bottom Association. However, I am writing in neither capacity. The Foggy Bottom Association will present its own case and the Board of Directors of Watergate East has written earlier of its opposition, though I will attach a copy of that letter for inclusion as well.

I am writing to you and the other Commission Members as a 32 year resident of Ward II and a 22 year resident of Foggy Bottom/West End.

I have personally witnessed and experienced the detrimental changes in our residential community resulting from the unending growth of the George Washington University. I have witnessed this diverse and unique residential community destroyed step by step, as a corporation continued to grow and strew out its great adverse impact. This, as my tax paying friends and neighbors fled and our residential neighborhood markedly shrunk.

When I first moved to Ward II in 1974, I felt that the University was not only an asset to the community but a needed stabilizing force. That is no longer the case. Today, and for some time, the negative effects on this neighborhood by the University have a very simple basis: this institution has simply become too big in every way for the neighborhood in which it is by law a guest but, in fact, is engulfing.

Personally, I can relate to you how for fourteen years I was a resident of Columbia Plaza. I was happy living in a building full of taxpaying residents, who like myself, lived the lives of working Washingtonians in an average rental accommodation. Then, and fairly suddenly, the nature of the building changed, as large numbers of students moved into the building.

In the end, I was forced to move from an apartment I loved because I got not one good night's sleep in ten. The help the University offers to eliminate such disruption largely is

no more than a Press Relations effort. As you heard on cross examination at the April 14 hearing, complaints filed by community residents are acknowledged with a polite response but not even tracked to conclusion.

The lack of the ability of the University to ease this objectionable effect on the community is because most of the objectionable effect is created by the mixing of populations that have very different life styles. What we have is hit and run disturbances. Picture this, its 2 AM; you are in bed asleep, a pack of students coming home from a bar or party pass under your window or down your hallway. You are awakened by very loud voices or music or by the slamming of doors. You are awake, more likely than not you will be upset and unlikely to quickly get back to sleep. Even if you do get back to sleep, the disturbance is very likely to be repeated several times that same night.

What to you do for remedy? Do you call the touted University Hotline or the MPD? And, say what? An undetermined number of students, whom I cannot describe, coming from I do not know where, going to I do not know where, disturbed my peace, please do something about it. Nothing is done because nothing can be done. The same holds true for repeated vandalism, drunk and disorderly conduct, someone, somewhere above raining down firecrackers from an upper level window or balcony or lit cigarette butts, urinating or vomiting in elevators and hallways, etc., etc. This wears down the resolve of any neighborhood.

Merely, promising to obey existing law and house 5,600 of 20,000 students on Campus will not help. This artificial campus in the middle of our once vibrant neighborhood cannot be built with prison bars. Noise making and large numbers of students will be moving continually by foot or by vehicle in and out of the surrounding area – our neighborhood.

As I said at the beginning of this letter, there are too many bodies in too small an area for a peaceful working residential neighborhood to survive. Mr. Trachtenberg agrees, he referred to our neighborhood as a “student ghetto.” Coincidentally, President Trachtenberg and all of his high-level university colleagues live outside of Foggy Bottom/West End.

On September 14, University representatives also agreed, testifying that the average resident student has some 300 square feet of space, about half the national average. The University solution is to build more buildings. Another solution and a better solution by far, would be to reduce the number of students. Build another campus elsewhere away from highly desirable and potentially high tax generating District land. Georgetown University, already a world-class institution, has half of GWU population.

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The current Campus Plan itself has little to commend it to any of us, only 70% of undergraduates (5,600) will be housed on campus. This means that at a minimum, 12,400 students are housed in our neighborhood off campus. The new plan before you would permit the bussing of potentially an unlimited number of students from other locations into Foggy Bottom and be uncapped in any cap. The existing Campus Plan has never even been fully enforced because of legal challenges by the University and allowances by the City.

Now, comes the University before this Commission to ask for serious revisions to the existing Plan that would not be in the economic interests of overburdened District taxpayers and of our community residents, offering in return WHAT? At best, simply to abide with some conditions of a law that it is already obligated to obey by Court Order. In other words, the University is offering less than nothing but is asking a great deal.

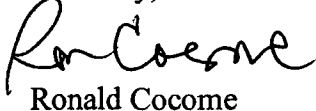
Mr. Hood asked the right question right up front. Why are we here? The answer to that is we are here to have our government asked to betray its own citizens and its own interests to satisfy an insatiable, greedy, and ever growing corporation.

Mr. Hitchcock asked why we are to believe that we will not be here again in far less than twenty years. The University commented in earlier testimony, that it is grow or die. So, of course we will be here again in far less than twenty years. This same University was back before the BZA within eleven months of the opening of the Health and Wellness Center to ask for monumental changes to a finely crafted BZA agreement with the University in that case.

In many ways, the University has a laudable goal in wanting to grow. But so would a steel company in similar circumstances. We need educated people; we need steel. But if too much steel is produced in too small a space the ensuing pollution becomes something other than beneficial. I submit that the same is true of a University. Too much of a good thing becomes a bad thing. There is, indeed, a solution, a smaller and better Foggy Bottom GWU campus.

I ask that you deny the applications before you and order the University to live within the existing Campus Plan to which it committed itself and, indeed, which it embraced such a short time ago.

Sincerely,



Ronald Cocome

Attachment (1)



Watergate East

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March 22, 2006

Jerrily R. Kress, Director
Office of the Zoning Commission
441 - 4th Street, NW #200-S
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Kress:

The Board of Directors of Watergate East, Incorporated, a residential housing cooperative in the District with over 200 units submits its opposition to filings 0611 and 0612 by the George Washington University.

WEI supports the position taken by ANC 2A and the Foggy Bottom Association. We believe that the University is out of compliance with its current Campus Plan and, therefore, the Zoning Commission should deny the set down of these two applications.

WEI believes that the current Campus Plan should be enforced, that a substitute Campus Plan not be considered and that the usage restrictions in the current plan not be expanded upon, as the University now requests.

Our fragile residential community cannot take the strain of more University growth, either in enrollment or in usage density. No less than the health, the quality of life and the property value of our members would be adversely affected should the University applications now before the Zoning Commission be approved.

At great cost to the District, the current Campus Plan has been upheld by the Courts and should now be enforced by the District.

Respectfully,

Darius Farzaneh, First Vice President

Cc: Bill Crews, Zoning Administrator
Joy Howell, President, Foggy Bottom Association
Vince Micone, Chair, ANC 2A
Ellen McCarthy, Director, Office of Planning