

2500 Virginia Avenue, NW #308
Washington, DC 20037
September 21, 2006

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 06-12
EXHIBIT NO. 124

Carol Mitten, Chair
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 – 4th Street, NW – 2nd Floor South
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Files 06-11 and 06-12

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I ask that you add this statement to the files cited above. This statement is a response, in part, to the Office of Planning Report in these matters.

During Christmas week of 2004 I received two telephone calls from Ellen McCarthy. Ellen let me know that she was under great pressure from GWU to proceed with plans for Square 54 and related matters. Ellen spoke of the University's great need to develop this square. She declared that this was our "club" to force an accommodation on all outstanding issues that the neighborhood had with the University.

I, as then FBA President, agreed with Ellen, that the best way to proceed was to hold direct and binding negotiations between the University, the City (represented by OP) and the community. At that time, we specifically agreed that the community would be represented at these negotiations ONLY and jointly by the FBA and ANC 2A.

I drew Ellen's attention to the fact that the University had called for community-wide meetings involving all stakeholders. We agreed that this was NOT the way to proceed.

The FBA and ANC 2A chose representatives to engage in this process and the FBA hired counsel -- paying a considerable amount for that counsel. We certainly gave every evidence of our good faith in the process OP proposed and agreed to support.

The first meeting of the negotiators, set to outline the process of these negotiations was disappointing. The very day of this first meeting I received, by mail, a notice from the University calling again for a series of public meetings. The acting facilitator had asked the University to refrain from such unilateral actions.

In fact, when two of our members brought this press release to Ms. McCarthy's attention. in the elevator, on the way to the meeting, Ellen commented that, "we might all just as well go home now." The chosen ANC representatives, as well as those from the FBA, appeared at this first meeting. The University was represented by Mr. Katz and others. Mr. Katz (himself an attorney) spent most of this meeting complaining about the presence of our attorney.

No progress was made whatever to advance upon the negotiation process promised to us

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by the Office of Planning.

At that point, the FBA decided not to participate in the PR dog and pony show staged by the University.

However, at no point did the FBA or to the best of my knowledge, ANC 2A even intimate that we were not interested in how this critical matter proceeded.

OP, however, chose to deal exclusively and behind closed doors with the University, arriving at the report now before you. We had been in touch with OP on other matters. The lines of communications were always open. Yet, OP chose not to include us in the decision-making. We were told about agency decisions only after the fact.

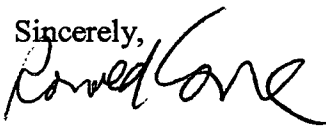
Again, the FBA and ANC 2A, the very organizations Ellen McCarthy told me at one point were needed to exclusively represent the community, ultimately were not even included. And, again be assured that lack of our inclusion did not originate with us. Our doors were always open to OP. Our interest in this matter was always at the top of our agenda – witness our participation here.

I believe that at some point, a political decision was made to exclude our participation and certainly to renege on Ellen McCarthy's commitment to us.

By example, to emphasis why I believe this process is politically driven let me quote the Zoning Administrator, when community representatives objected to the way in which he had broken promises earlier made to the community for a full and an independent audit. Mr. Crews said that while he might agree with us, "he was acting as a agent of the Mayor and took his orders from above." At the same time, Mr. Crews also said that a different Mayor might well have offered different results. What kind of "audit" is that?

The community responses selectively chosen by the University and, sadly, by our own tax supported agencies, do not represent our Foggy Bottom/West End community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Cocome". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ronald" and last name "Cocome" clearly distinguishable.

Ronald Cocome