

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Statement re ZC Case No. 06-11/06-12
George Washington University Campus Plan 2006-2025
October 11, 2006

Good Evening –

My name is Barbara Spillinger. I am a past chair of ANC-2A, a past vice president of the Foggy Bottom Association (FBA) and a current advocate for neighborhood preservation.

Six years ago, when I was chair of the ANC and Michael Thomas was president of the Foggy Bottom Association, we worked together for many, many hours and through many meetings with GW, OP and other interested parties to draft a Campus Plan for the University that would reflect the vision of the university while at the same time respond to the concerns of the community over such issues as development, housing, noise, traffic, the environment and number of students.

A compromise plan was adopted. It has not been problem-free. No sooner was the Order issued than GW filed a series of challenges in DC Superior Court claiming the District didn't have the authority to enforce the agreement, and while GW did not prevail, there have been lapses in enforcement – and completion of an independent audit to verify the student enrollment cap is still pending.

Nevertheless, GW is now seeking approval for an unprecedented 20-year plan that would permit the addition of a staggering amount of new commercial and academic construction and increased density that would overwhelm and dwarf the surrounding neighborhood.

It is incredulous to me that at this point in time GW is asking the city and its residents to throw out a binding agreement with carefully crafted reasonable development restraints, to consider instead a new plan envisioning extraordinary expansion.

Additionally, an inordinately long and unrealistic 20-year plan invites challenges, amendments and revisions in response to inevitable changing circumstances. Who among us can reasonably envision a 20-year plan for anything?

Yes, there will be a time when GW's future will be debated and discussed, but that time is not now. We ask that you deny this inappropriate, impractical request by GW for current consideration of a new Campus Plan.

Thank you.

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