

ZONING COMMISSION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PUBLIC HEARING

CASE NO. 06-17 D.C.

Public Schools & The George Washington University

SCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (HSA)'

TESTIMONY

*Andrea M. Bagwell, President, School Without Walls Senior High School
Home and School Association*

Andre Lindsey, Alumni, School Without Walls Senior High School

Peter May, Parent Representative, Home and School Association

*Susan Punnett, Parent Representative School Modernization
Committee*

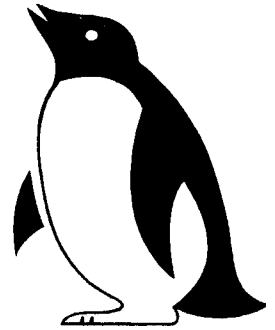
*Sharon Vollin, Faculty Member School Without Walls Senior High
School*

*Serena Wong, Student, School Without Walls Senior High School &
President, Student Government Association*

Monday, October 30, 2006, @ 6:30 P.M.
Office of Zoning Hearing Room
441 4 Street, N.W., Suite 220-South
Washington, D.C. 20001

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
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CASE NO. 06-17
EXHIBIT NO. 55

School Without Walls Senior High School
Home and School Association
2130 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-724-4889



2006-2007 Executive Committee

Principal	Richard Trogisch
President	Andrea M. Bagwell
Vice President	Daniela Carozza
Treasurer	Paula Blake
Secretary	Whitney Watriss
At Large	Barbara McKenna
At Large	Barbara Nichols
At Large	Jani Drohan
At Large	Rikki Kramer
At Large	Beth Hall
Appointed	Mark Brown
Appointed	Peter Copland
Appointed	Stuart Miles-McLean
Appointed	TBA
Faculty Liaison	Charles Butler
LSRT Liaison	Michael Cushman

"Meeting Students' and Teachers' Needs"

Good evening Chairperson Hood, members of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission, and Staff. My name is Andrea Bagwell and I have the pleasure of serving as the 2006-2007 President of the School Without Walls Home and School Association. With me this evening are Mrs. Susan Punnett, a former parent, co-founder & initial board member of the HSA and member of the school's modernization committee; Mr. Peter May, a parent from the School Without Walls; Ms. Sharon Vollin, a member of the faculty at the School Without Walls and the Chair of the Visual Arts Department; Mr. Andre Lindsey, a former student at the School Without Walls who served as the President of the Student Government Association during his senior year at Walls. Mr. Lindsey currently attends George Washington University, and is the recipient of the "Stephen Tractenberg Scholarship", which entitles him to a full scholarship. Also present is Ms. Serena Wong, a current student at the School Without Walls and the President of the Student Government Association.

Let me take the opportunity to recognize our Principal, Mr. Richard Trogisch and Assistant Principal, Mrs. Sylvia Isaac as well as members of the Home and School Executive Committee and ask them to please stand, along with the parent members of our Modernization Committee, Ms. Susan Punnett, Mr. Earl Shamwell, and Mr. Carl Bergman. These parent representatives no longer have children attending the School Without Walls but have chosen to donate their personal time tirelessly over the last ten or so years to make the school modernization project a reality. More importantly, I would be remiss as the President of this organization without recognizing all of the outstanding faculty members, staff, parents, students and supporters in the audience.

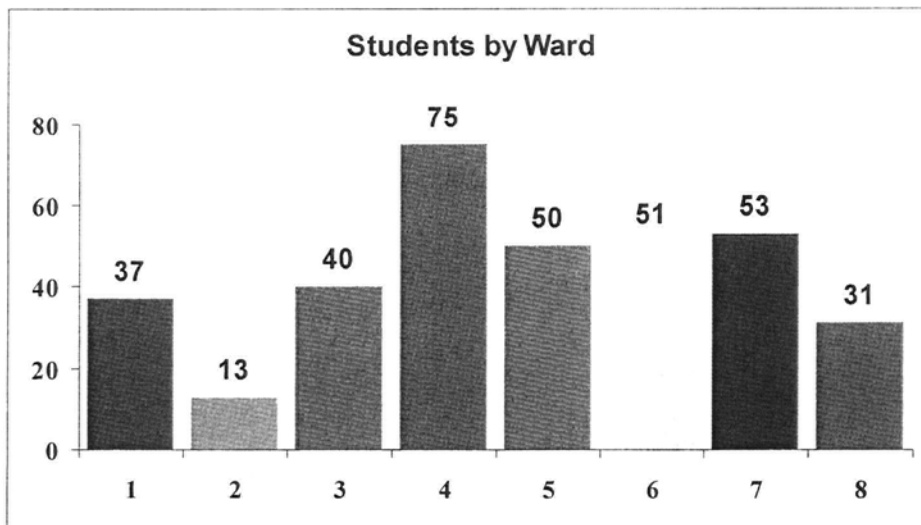
Each of us on the panel before you has prepared a statement which we have submitted for your review and information. I have asked each panelist to summarize their statements highlighting the salient points. Additionally, Mr. Peter May, as part of his presentation will walk the Zoning Commission through a power point presentation that contains photographs of former and current infrastructure and facilities challenges at our school. This power point presentation has also been attached to Mr. May's testimony for the Commission's review and information.

The School Without Walls Home and School Association is in full support of the joint application submitted by the District of Columbia Public Schools (hereinafter referred to as "DCPS") and the George Washington University (hereinafter referred to as "GW"). As you are aware, the Applicant is requesting consolidated approval of a planned unit development and a PUD-related amendment to the zoning map of the District of Columbia.

Founded on May 15, 2000, the Home and School Association is a legally recognized tax exempt organization by both the Internal Revenue Service and the District of Columbia government. Specifically, the Home and School Association is a 501[c] [3] organization. As stated in our Articles of Organization as filed with the District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, "the primary purpose of the SWW/HSA is to support and advance the educational mission of the School Without Walls ("SWW")."

Founded March 1971, the School Without Walls competes academically with the District's top-tier public senior high school institutions. School Without Walls (SWW) is a small accredited, progressive public high school in the District of Columbia that serves 351 students, grades 9 through 12, who seek a sound college preparatory program that includes "real world" learning experiences. With a strong focus on the Humanities, the School Without Walls provides District of Columbia students with a challenging experience. The school has an outstanding faculty and staff who challenge students to reach their highest potential in a rigorous academic setting. Teachers and staff celebrate student success and assume the role of advisors/mentors on a daily basis.

The School Without Walls is on the campus of the George Washington University and draws its students from all quadrants of the District of Columbia. The school community is diverse with 351 students and their families, from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, cultures, socio-economic status groups, and experiences. (*See Exhibit #1 School Without Walls Student Map*) The following chart depicts the geographical areas from which our students reside:



While the majority of the instruction occurs in the classroom, the use of the “city as a classroom” is an integral part of the School Without Walls teaching and learning experience. We expect intellectual inquiry to go beyond the classroom texts into the community and embrace the diversity, abilities, ethnicity, and economic backgrounds of our students in creating our vision of an exemplary instructional program. The school’s academic program includes humanities, science, math, social studies, and electives, advanced placement courses and college courses at GW and other local universities for qualifying students.

The school’s Humanities focus provides the framework for academic rigor by requiring the study of primary works interdisciplinary teaching and learning, exploring the interrelationships of ideas, events and persons across academic disciplines. Teachers collaborate on a daily basis in order to implement important ideas surrounding the program.

Our students do well because of the location of the school and in spite of the crumbling facilities. It would be an injustice to deny our students who live in the Nation’s Capitol an opportunity to attend a first rate college preparatory high school that is located on a college campus. This academic setting advances intellectual curiosity builds self esteem and prepares our students for the many challenges that lie ahead. The location of the school has a positive and direct impact on the Foggy Bottom area as well as the District of Columbia. We are educating and training the District’s workforce as well as grooming the

future leaders of the next generation. We are teaching our students to be intellectuals who are respectfully, responsible, community and civic minded.

In addition to traditional classroom instruction, the School Without Walls utilizes community resources to encourage students to pursue both academic and higher-order critical thinking skills through inquiry, experimentation, discussion and field-based experiences. SWW is located on the campus of George Washington University (GW) and draws its students from the entire city.

SWW is consistently rated as one of the premier high schools in Washington, D.C. and has been recognized and ranked by Newsweek Magazine as one of the best high schools in the country, ranking 700 out of 14, high schools in the nation. Students at Walls are given the power to change their lives and to light the world. Walls has sought to develop the total person: to instill in our students a sense of responsibility.

The history of tapping community resources to enrich and expand upon textbook learning is a tradition at School Without Walls. Through internships and exposure to practitioners and others as teachers, students have the opportunity to expand their horizons, engage in stimulating learning activities, and see the practical application of their studies for the future while actively helping shape their high school education.

School Without Walls students participate in museum and field studies and have opportunities for independent study, seminars, and

peer teaching. Examples include a course "African American History" taught by Bernard Demczuk, Assistant Vice President, George Washington in the office of Government International and Corporate Affairs, participation at the Shakespeare Theater/Kennedy Center. Over the years, SWW students have interned with many public and private sector employers including law firms, (Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver, and Jacobson) health organizations, U.S. Senators and Representatives, educational institutions, private businesses, and local and federal government agencies.

Among the challenges our school community has set for it is to maintain our record for excellence. This is evidenced by our SAT 9 test results. SWW was one of a small number of high schools in the District to make Adequate Yearly Progress (under the definition of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation) by exceeding the required District standard in the areas of reading and math. Our goal this year will be to continue to improve while moving towards the expected 100% proficiency level in 2014 as mandated by the legislation. SWW performed on an average better than the District and national levels for the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades in reading vocabulary, comprehension and mathematics.

SWW students have a long list of accomplishments. Over the past four years 100% of SWW graduates have matriculated to four-year colleges such as George Washington University, Yale, Princeton, Spellman, Syracuse, Hampton University, University of Virginia, Williams, Morehouse, and the U.S. Service Academies.

Over the past five school years, SWW had the only student in the history of the District to again place in the Intel International Science Competition (1st Place), one student with a perfect SAT score (1600), four National Merit Scholars, one National Achievement Scholar, two Presidential Scholars, Bill Millennium Scholastic Athlete Award recipients, Washington Metropolitan Scholars, Joe Riley Youth Leadership Awards and a student whose play was performed by the Young Playwright's Theater in Washington, D.C. For two years running a Walls student was a finalist in the American Legion Oratorical Contest, another was selected to represent DC in the United States Senate Youth Program and the debate team took fourth place in the national competition. In addition, SWW teams placed first city wide and represented the District in both the national Moot Court competition and the Barbara Jordan Youth Debates on Health. One student was also selected as a finalist in The Washington Post Music and Dance Scholarship Awards.

Graduating students average about \$4 million in scholarship awards annually. In the last two years, many students have been awarded full four-year scholarships including the Stephen Tractenberg Scholarship (GWU) worth \$180,000.00 each.

SWW students are expected to participate in extracurricular activities. Activities include National Honor Society; It's Academic, choirs, Art Honor Society, community service club, AZN Club, Model UN, National Association of Black Engineers, Student Government Association, and drama clubs. SWW students who want to participate on a team or in an activity that is not offered are encouraged to organize a new group. One hundred hours of community service are

required for graduation from School Without Walls in addition to one semester of an internship experience and the completion of at least one college course. While not recognized as a sports powerhouse, SWW does offer a variety of competitive athletic teams. Team sports include boys and girl's soccer, boys' basketball, skiing, track and field, crew, swimming, baseball and softball, and girls' volleyball.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Zoning Commission today and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

ATTACHMENTS

Distribution of Students Attending School Without Walls in SY2005-06

Total Enrollment = 339

Average Travel Distance = 4 mile
Median Travel Distance = 4.17 mile
Note: One student from Maryland.

