

Cynthia Jachles
2450 Virginia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037

November 20, 2006

Carol J. Mitten, Chairman
Zoning Commission
Government of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 1100 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Support for George Washington University's (GWU) Development of Square 54
Zoning Commission Case No. 06-27

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I submit this testimony in support of GWU's Square 54 Plan. My favorable comments are submitted from three (3) points of view. I am a Foggy Bottom resident, a real estate professional and am an alumna of the University. Please note that the opinions are personal and do not represent my employer.

The plan for Square 54 is a great compromise on the part of GWU and is a much needed project for the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. I believe the University accepted some of the recommendations from the ULI panels in May of 2005 which included area residents and on which I participated.

It is most appropriate that GWU revise its Campus Plan to bring it current with all that is required for the area-conditions change and needs change. Private entities change short and long term business plans without criticism and you have agreed that a university (a "place of learning" where change and growth are nurtured) should be allowed the same right.

Real Estate Logic

Square 54 is one of the largest most desirable pieces of vacant land remaining in the District of Columbia. Because of that, the University is prudent in planning a transit-oriented development project at the Foggy Bottom Metrorail station. Some area residents have favored use of the site for university purposes which does not make sense due to its prime location.

Some Foggy Bottom residents complain about the loss of market housing due to University projects. This project adds 400 units back into the housing stock and the tax roles so it is strange to me that there would be any community opposition to this project.

District of Columbia Goals

Mayor Williams has always promoted a goal of attracting 100,000 new tax paying residents to the District. This development will contribute market rate, workforce and affordable housing towards that goal.

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Foggy Bottom Needs New Amenities

The neighborhood needs a new full service grocery store and retail space including restaurants. I believe that I am in the majority of people, who desire more commercial businesses in the area. This is the perfect spot because it is surrounded by Washington Circle and university buildings-added pedestrian traffic and perhaps noise from happy, celebratory residents at the restaurants will not disturb the existing Foggy Bottom residents. New residents will know what commercial and retail uses will be included in the complex and consciously choose to live in a mixed-use development for the retail and restaurants that will be at their doorstep.


View as an Alumna

I am proud that my alma mater is in the heart of the Nation's Capitol. As such, it has properly planned campus buildings and properties to meet its educational needs as well as the needs of the District of Columbia.

The University has responded to concerns of residents in Columbia Plaza and committed to removing undergraduates from its 224 units by 2008 and replacing them with graduate students who are more mature, responsible adults. That is really important to me as a Columbia Plaza tenant.

Thank you for your consideration of my opinion.

Sincerely,


Cynthia Jachles