

DC Zoning Commission  
Office of Zoning  
441 4<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20001

ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO. 07-12  
EXHIBIT NO. 37  
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Re: Z.C. Case No. 07-12  
The George Washington University-Mt. Vernon Campus  
Special Exemption Application for Amendment to and  
Further Processing of an Approved Campus Plan  
Pelham Replacement Project

Good evening, Chairperson Mitten and fellow members of the Commission. I am Thomas Bradley, a resident of the Palisades area living at 4742 W Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007.

I will limit my brief testimony this evening to matters related to stormwater management on the GWU/MV campus because the other important collateral issues such as the landscape buffer, night-time lighting, noise and the reallocation of approximately 22,300 sq. ft. of building space, etc., will be covered by other participants in this hearing. The paramount issue here, which is the construction of a new and expanded Pelham residential facility, cannot be considered without giving attention to all the issues mentioned above.

I do not believe GWU has a comprehensive campus-wide stormwater plan in being at this time, even 5 years after the installation of a culvert at the extreme northwest corner of the campus. The steep topography of the campus and the lack of modern-day methods of impoundment and stormwater removal cause a large part of the precipitation falling on the upper (eastern part sloping up to Foxhall Road) campus to flow into this extreme northwest and downhill part of the campus. There was a flooding problem shortly after the installation of the culvert in 2002 because the entrance to the culvert had not been kept clear of debris by GWU. That problem has been remedied for the time being, and I hope permanently, but a long-term threat remains if the headwall surrounding the culvert opening proves to be permeable. The sharp right angle of the culvert, instead of a more gradual tapering turn, puts added stress on the headwall. At this time there is no apparent damage to the lower riparian residents along W Street, although there is damage near the corner of W and 48<sup>th</sup> Streets further downhill. Unfortunately, the nature of stormwater damage is that it is often subsurface in nature and invisible until some manifestation such as sinkholes

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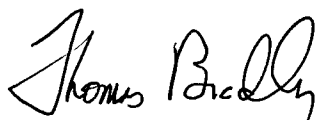
suddenly appear. This has been our experience on W Street prior to the installation of the culvert.

It is hoped that GWU will now develop a stormwater plan to better control the excess flow further uphill and direct it into the municipal stormwater system which exists in the surrounding streets. GWU has proposed in draft form that a series of quarterly meetings be set up in conjunction with the neighbors and others. The purpose of the meetings would be to develop a stormwater plan for implementation in its next 10-year plan which begins in 2011. We welcome this late initiative but question the timing – 4 years between now and 2011 to just talk and draft, and then starting in 2011, 10 years to implement. It could obviously be many years before GWU took any meaningful steps toward implementation. We have already been having quarterly community meetings since 1999 – 8 years – without a discussion of stormwater issues. When I tried to bring up this issue at several community meetings prior to 2002, I was told by a GWU/MV official that the school was not responsible for stormwater once it left campus. Does GWU still believe this? During that considerable period of time, the Mt. Vernon campus has experienced basement floodings in several of its buildings on the north side of the campus and repeatedly at the chapel further downhill. The remedial action taken by GWU was to stack bales of hay where needed, or wood chips and hay at the southeast corner of the chapel.

With respect to the principal road running the length of the campus on the W Street side, there are at most 2 catchbasins in place – and they are not strategically located where they can effectively capture stormwater. How can one have a stormwater plan in place, which GWU now claims, when the catchbasin component has been virtually ignored ever since GWU became the owner of the property?

Bales of hay, wood chips, lack of catchbasins, etc., suggest that GWU has not made any serious effort to date to develop and implement a comprehensive stormwater management plan. If GWU had such a plan in place, presumably they would have revealed it by now. Instead they seek another 4 years to develop a plan in conjunction with others. Let us start right now on an initiative that leads to an improvement over the present situation, with the goal of having a written plan in hand by January 1, 2008, with implementation to follow immediately.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas Bradley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" and last name "Bradley" clearly distinguishable.