

Testimony before the
DC Zoning Board
June 6, 2011

My name is Brenda Moorman. My family and I have resided at 1416 33rd Street, NW, three blocks from the Georgetown University Campus for more than thirty years.

From 2005 to 2010, I was Chair of the Beautification Committee of the Citizens Association of Georgetown. The primary work of the committee is to foster cleanliness of the streets, sidewalks and primarily non-commercial public spaces of Georgetown. In addition, a major focus has been on the damaging rat population which infests homes, businesses and public areas. Of course, those two issues go hand in hand and both require public education, residents' responsibility, city enforcement and diligence to control the problems.

During those five years of my service as chairman, I accompanied the DPW trash inspector, Charlene Barber, many times on her twice weekly rounds in Georgetown. So I am very familiar with the trash, garbage and rat problems in Georgetown. The overwhelming majority of trash violations occur on the west side of Georgetown and most often at student occupied off campus housing. Unfortunately citations for trash violations are sent to landlords and not the tenants. Most tickets were in the \$75.00 range, so most landlords simply absorb the fines as the cost of doing business. There are trash hot spots, such as the 3500 block of O Street, Prospect Street from Potomac St. to 36th Street, and the 1200 block of 33rd Street among others. These areas are populated overwhelming by Georgetown students. In some cases, the trash accumulations created an immediate health problem and required action by the DC Health Department. A photo

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 10-32
EXHIBIT NO. 230

is supplied to you of the back patio of 3303 O Street, which was occupied by Georgetown students. In another photo, over turned garbage and cans blocked cars traveling on 33rd Street and remained there several days until university staff agreed to clean it up. Over the years I have made hundreds of such photos and I will provide more if desired.

There is no question that the streets are much messier on the west side of Georgetown because of the preponderance of students living in the areas closer to the University. There is a familiar advertising phrase used by real estate agents which refers to houses on “the desirable east side.” In fact, such description has a basis in fact. Who would want to buy a house next to a noisy group which disposes of their garbage out the front door on the street without any regard for the designated garbage collection days? In fact, often when students use trash use cans, they are left on the street all the time and used simply as a dump. Garbage is deposited any time without reference to collection days. Many times the overstuffed open cans are on the street but not at the curb so that weeks pass with the garbage not being picked up.

There are often complaints about trash and garbage during the end of semester move out times because it is so unsightly; however, the more insidious problem is garbage on the street on a regular daily basis. It is unsightly, unsanitary and degrades the community.

In fact, the issue really comes down to community. A problem with a large student transient population is that there is no connection to the community as a whole, just to the university, if at all. Often as I walk around Georgetown, I speak to people about trash. At a property where there are trash violations, if someone is outside, I ask if they are aware of the trash regulations. Frequently, the response from Georgetown

students is that someone else is responsible for the trash - a roommate, a neighbor or people walking on the street. Almost always, the conversation ends with a student saying, “Well you know, we are just students”. Unfortunately, we do know.



1222 33rd St, NW



1401 33rd St, NW



3527 O St, NW

