

OFFICE OF ZONING

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J. Richard Cherna
1409 33rd St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007
June 7, 2011, 2011

DC Zoning Commission
441 – 4th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Support for Georgetown University's Campus Plan

Dear Zoning Commission:

I am writing as a Georgetown homeowner having purchased my house two years ago upon my family's decision to relocate our lives to the nation's capital. I would note that my wife Susan and I are both attorneys, she in the private sector and I as a federal public servant. I recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan. This is the second time I have lived in Georgetown, with the first being when I was an undergraduate at Georgetown University from 1974 to 1978. Both of my children are Georgetown graduates and they each resided during their matriculations on campus and in Georgetown rentals. Accordingly, I feel I have a relatively informed idea about the various issues and the differing points of view that have been expressed by stakeholders. I attended a recent hearing of your Commission in May. I am both a District taxpayer and a voter. My wife and I plan to continue living in Georgetown after we complete our "working" careers and in fact we have been scouting a somewhat larger residence to purchase so that our anticipated grandchildren will have adequate space to visit us in the future.

Given the above, I am a real "booster" of Georgetown, encouraging friends, business colleagues, and family to not only come and visit but also to move to the area when appropriate. When I say that I am a booster of Georgetown I include both the University and the entire community of which the University is a critical part. We have lived and traveled around the world and I am convinced that Georgetown is a unique place to live, learn, and grow. This stems in great part because of the diversity and richness of the city life where you have beautiful homes, parks, shopping, entertainment and fine dining, historical sites, museums, access to the nation's capital, and access to one of the world's great educational institutions. I moved here with my family because of this diversity and I am chagrined when I see a certain constituency be so one-sided in their approach to our community. By that I mean those who seem to inordinately blame the University and its students for problems that arise from the many constituents sharing a small and vital area of the city.

I am fully supportive of the University and its students being responsible stewards for this wonderful place that we all seem to care for deeply. I believe that the Administration is being reasonable with its 10 year Plan and in the way it interacts with other stakeholders. I am sure that they want to continue to cooperate as a tenet of the Jesuit tradition is to contribute to community. I feel certain that a more collaborative approach would be in the best interests of all. But collaboration (and cooperation) is a process where good will and compromise is done by all. At times it seems that the willingness to compromise is missing from some of the rather vocal citizen groups. Not all of the

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District of Columbia

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EXHIBIT NO. 289

Georgetown residents are of a like mind as is evidenced by the views in this letter, which I know my wife shares.

While I have not followed the "ins and outs" of the many Georgetown community issues over the years, I do have a casual impression that the citizen groups have a long record of opposition to many things that most would view as progressive measures. For instance, the traffic problems might not be as bad if today's advocates' predecessors had not been so successful in their campaign against the Metro. Similarly, I would note there was significant opposition to developing the Waterfront and I assume many other projects that have inured to the benefit and diversity of the wonderful community we now enjoy. Accordingly, there is certainly room to question the track record (and perhaps even the motivations) of some of the University's most vocal critics. As I listened to the hearing last month after having briefly reviewed the University's Plan, it seemed that the opposition was taking some significant liberties with their facts and reasoning.

In conclusion, I urge the Commission to approve the University's Plan. I would be happy to serve in some way to facilitate a better dialogue between "Town and Gown" and will provide other information upon request.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Richard Chema", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J. Richard Chema, Esq.
1409 33rd. St. NW,
Washington, D.C. 20007