Milton M. Carrow

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June 30, 2000

Ms. Sheila Cross Reid, Chair
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: George Washington University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan
Application No. 16553

Dear Ms. Reid:

I enclose my statement entitled "Why The Foggy Bottom Residential Community is Important" for consideration in the above proceeding and for its inclusion in the record. I will appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Board on this matter at its next hearing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Milton M. Carrow

BZA
Case No. 16553
Exhibit No. 168

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16553
EXHIBIT NO.168

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To:District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
Re: George Washington University Foggy Bottom Campus Plan
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WHY THE FOGGY BOTTOM RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT

The preservation of the integrity of Foggy Bottom residential community is important, not only because of local interests, but also in the interest of good public policy. Foggy Bottom is a prime example of a nationwide recognition that the ideal community is one of pedestrian scale. The movement is called the New Urbanism. Vincent Scully, the famed Yale architect and historian, discussed this development in the Summer, 2000 issue of the Brookings Review, a symposium on "Reinventing the City" (including an article by our own Mayor, Anthony Williams).

What are the proponents of the New Urbanism seeking to accomplish? According to Scully the New Urbanism seeks "to create, or revive, the kind of town and city environment that most Americans at all economic levels love best...". What are its elements? One is to get away from the dependence and frustrations of the automobile; thus, a community designed primarily for pedestrian access to basic needs, including the workplace, at least by public transportation. Another is an environment suitable to its locale, such as building design and street alignment. Also, it is not necessary for the community to be a large scale development; it can be a section in a large city; thus encouraging neighborliness. Finally, Scully says, "the New Urbanism has always had its sights set on affordable houses and rental units."

One of the examples of the new urbanism is Kentlands in suburban Maryland. Its well laid out streets and facilities and "largely constructed of brick with many row houses in the Georgian vernacular of the Middle Atlantic tradition." has made it a successful project. The towns of Reston and Columbia are larger versions of the new urbanism. Others appear in Sacramento, Memphis, Portland and Charleston.

The good news is that Foggy Bottom has all of the most desirable elements of the New Urbanism and more - an integrated neighborhood where neighbors converse with each other, with everything needed within walking distance, tree-lined streets, flowered front gardens and overall charm and active community organizations. The bad news, is that, despite the expansion of the idea of the New Urbanism throughout the country, the pressures on Foggy Bottom are forcing it to contract. Instead of appreciating the importance of maintaining this exemplary community, the forces of development are encroaching on it. The new hospital (the existing one could have been upgraded), the conversion of a hotel to a dormitory, the building of the new university Wellness Center beyond the campus are examples. These things are exacerbated by the unsupervised occupation of private residences by students who have no desire or obligation to be part of the community, whose automobiles clog the streets and whose partying disturb the neighbors. The public authorities seem unable to deal with or are oblivious to these destructive incursions. The university crassly continues its own invasions.

If the New Urbanism is, in fact, a desirable movement for adaptation in Washington, then the existing space in Foggy Bottom, built or unbuilt, should be designated for the expansion of new urban objectives rather than contraction. Scully points out that mayors throughout the country, including Mayor Anthony Williams, believe this to be best for their cities. In the past, the public authorities in Washington have not thought in these terms regarding the erosion of the Foggy Bottom residential community. In considering the George Washington University Campus Plan , the Mayor, the Board of Zoning Adjustment and all other public officials as well as university officials should take these matters into account.

Milton M. Carrow, a resident of Foggy Bottom