Statement of Virginia Watkin on behalf of The Cosmos Club

I am a member of the Board of Management of the Cosmos Club and am testifying on behalf of the Club to conditionally support the application by the Phillips Collection now pending before this Board. The Cosmos Club, a Washington institution since 1878, has owned and occupied the building at 2121 Massachusetts Avenue since 1952. Thus we have co-existed with the Philips Collection in Square 66 for almost half a century, sharing, along with other neighbors in the square, Hillyer Court alley, which runs from Florida Avenue on the west to 21st Street on the east. In addition to their physical proximity as neighbors, the Cosmos Club and the Phillips Collection share an abiding commitment to the arts. Indeed many of our members were admitted to the Cosmos Club on the basis of their meritorious original work in the arts, and of course the Phillips Collection is nationally and internationally recognized as an outstanding small art museum where visitors can experience modern art in the gracious home of the renowned collector Duncan Phillips. Many Cosmos Club members are members and supporters of the Phillips Collection.

The Phillips Collection has applied for special exception and variance relief in order to expand its facilities to create an internationally recognized Center for the Study and Appreciation of Modern Art to allow the Phillips to deepen its educational mission and create new connections and new audiences outside the walls of the museum. This Center is designed to complement and extend the Phillips core competencies - - its extraordinary art collection, its outstanding special exhibitions, and its unique ways of communicating the content and meaning of both. The expansion is also intended to ensure that the Phillips Library and Archives are accessible, adequately housed, provide for scholarship, and have sufficient space and resources to accommodate their future needs. Finally, we understand that the museum accreditation body, the American Association of Museums, is placing increasing emphasis on the educational component of an accredited museum's activities. A major purpose of the expansion proposed by the Phillips Collection, for which it needs a favorable ruling by this Board, is to enable the Phillips to meet the AAM standards and maintain its

BZA
Case No. 16618
Exhibit No. 57

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16618
EXHIBIT NO.57

accreditation as a museum. For these reasons the Cosmos Club supports the pending application of the Phillips Collection with the conditions I will now address.

The Cosmos Club has extensively reviewed the plans submitted by the Phillips Collection for the proposed project in order to assess their impact on the Club. Representatives of the Club have had a number of discussions with representatives of the Phillips Collection, and as a result of those discussions the Phillips has agreed to amend its plans. We understand that those amended plans will be part of the record in this case and will be part of any approval that may be granted by this Board. The Cosmos Club has agreed to support the Phillips Collection's application based upon a set of conditions to be submitted to the record in this case, and we request that these conditions be made a part of any order that is issued in this matter.

Before closing my testimony I want to note that the Cosmos Club is aware that many of our neighbors have serious issues with the proposed expansion of the Phillips Collection, but we understand that they and the Phillips have engaged in negotiations to deal with those issues. The Cosmos Club has resolved its issues with the Phillips Collection, and we sincerely hope that the neighbors and the Phillips will be able to resolve their differences. Thank you.