Washington East
FOUNDATION

January 27, 2003

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Mrs. Carol J. Mitten
Chairman
DC Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 02-15, Recreation Centers

Dear Ms. Mitten:

At its regular monthly meeting on January 13, the Washington East Foundation board of directors authorized this correspondence to articulate its position with regard to the above stated case. Please be advised that WEF supports efforts by the DC Department of Recreation to obtain a text amendment to cover modernization of all recreation centers as a matter-of-right. Such action by the Commission would permit the current construction and renovation efforts to continue on schedule and without costly delays as would result if project by project reviews before the Board of Zoning Adjustment are necessitated.

The rationale for our position is as follows. As we understand it, the standards proffered by the Department of Recreation and the Office of Planning are:

1. 40% occupancy as a matter-of-right in a residential zone. DPR's physical needs, development policies and the maintenance of open green space are all appropriately accommodated.
2. 45%-foot height limitation in the residential district. This makes for openness and lack of obstruction in a residential zone.
3. Any facility not exceeding 50,000 square feet in size be treated as a matter-of-right.

Our board of directors embrace these standards as reasonable and respectful of good public policy, the intent and purposes of the zoning regulations, and the views of citizens who have been engaged in planning and design work for these centers, east of the river over the past several years.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-15
Exhibit 51

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-15
EXHIBIT NO.51

Establishing stricter height and size limitations will have a devastating adverse impact on the city's ability to bring new and modernized facilities on line in a timely manner in the city's most needy area of the city after many, many years of neglect and dis-investment. Structures restricted to 15,000 to 20,000 square feet are inadequate to meet the communities' needs for state-of-the art, comprehensive centers of learning, sports, arts, music, and health education activities for all ages. A narrowly defined interpretation of allowed uses for recreation and community centers at this stage would deny communities east of the river long overdue public services that are sensitive to their needs.

For your reference, please know that the Washington East Foundation is a nonprofit, tax exempt, operating and grant-making organization. We actively engage a broad cross section of residents and organizations in addressing community wide challenges and creating new opportunities East of the River to:

- Attract new resources—funds, experts, public services, and partners;
- Operate and or fund a limited number of projects aimed at achieving visable, measurable and sustainable improvements in the quality of life, east of the river; and
- Serve as a program clearinghouse, technical support resource, and catalyst for leveraging resources to expand and replicate successful programs, East of the River.

Consistent with this mission and interests, WEF stands firmly in support of the timely modernization and program upgrades for the Hillcrest Recreation Center, the Deanwood Recreation Center, Kingman and Heritage Islands, the Benning Ridge Recreation Center, and the Fort Davis Recreation Center in Ward 7; and the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, and the Johnson Junior High School Recreation Center in Ward 8 as planned by, with and for residents and represented in the Highlights of Key Commitments in the Mayor's 2003 Budget.

In closing Ms. Mitten, the WEF strongly encourages you and your colleagues to do what is in the best interest of East of the River neighborhoods and adopt a text amendment to cover modernization of all recreation centers as a matter-of-right consistent with the standards proffered by DPR and OP. Should you have any questions or desire further information from us, please so advise.

Sincerely,

Carrie L. Thornhill
President

cc: ANC 7 B
Hillcrest Community Civic Association
Department of Parks & Recreation
Office of Planning