MICHIGAN PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Washington, D.C.

Established 1917

02-20

RE: The Catholic University of America Campus Plan, 20 February 2003 Zoning Commission Hearing

At the 4 February 2003 meeting, the Michigan Park Citizens Association endorsed the appended position which was also, subsequently, endorsed by ANC 5A. The position, developed by a task force coordinated by Association member and ANC Commissioner Mary Baird Currie, included two past Association presidents (Dino Drudi and Gwendolyn Means) and reflects positions the Association has taken over the past several years. In early 1999 the Association began to pay particular attention to the University's plans when the University dropped its long-standing guarantee of on-campus housing to its upperclassmen. Last year the University briefed the Association on its campus plan. In 2000 the Association testified for city-backed revenue bonds so the University could construct new dormitories and a student center.

For over a hundred years Catholic University and the neighborhood have harmoniously coexisted, but in recent years that harmony has been severely tested by negative University impacts on the adjoining neighborhoods. Michigan Park is not yet in the dire situation neighborhoods near Georgetown and George Washington find themselves, but we could end up there if the University expands its undergraduate enrollment by the planned 868 students without adequate housing.

At the hearing the University addressed two of the three issues in the appended position, but the University must explicitly include those commitments in the campus plan. We are gratified that the University committed to continue requiring underclassmen to live on-campus with limited exceptions (e.g., nontraditional students, students residing in the area with their families). Likewise, we are hopeful that, pursuant to what seemed like a meeting of the minds at the hearing, the University will revise its campus plan to include a specific commitment to vigorously enforce its off-campus discipline policy. After the egregious 1999 and 2000 house parties forced the relationship between the community and the neighborhood into a well publicized crisis, the University belatedly adopted an off-campus discipline policy and began disciplining its students for off-campus misbehavior. The University, however, remains under pressure from its students to discontinue that policy or relax its enforcement.

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2003 FEB 24 PM 1:16

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-20
Exhibit 61

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-20
EXHIBIT NO.61

Students who choose to move off campus might be adventuresome enough to move to DuPont Circle or Summit Hills, but those who want to live on campus whom the University forces to move off campus would more likely want to be close to classes and campus social activities. Consequently, they would be more likely to move into nearby neighborhoods. Moreover, if they do not have automobiles, they might be more likely to want to be close to campus because busses are slow and public transportation does not run late at night. If enough students were to be forced off campus and move into our neighborhood, it would lose its family-oriented residential character. Students living where there is a high concentration of student houses are likely to behave differently than in a family-oriented neighborhood like ours now is with more aggressive partying, less upkeep of their houses, etc.

We are not asking for upperclassmen to be required to live on campus—only that the University provide adequate, affordable, attractive housing for those who wish to do so, as has been its long-standing policy/practice. Based on past history when the on-campus housing guarantee was in place, just under two-thirds of the juniors and just over one-third of the seniors chose to live on campus. The University has not, and should not now, predicate its operation on forcing students, against their wishes, to move off campus.

The campus plan is misleading in calling the University a predominantly graduate institution. The sentence on campus plan page 12, "The University...has always had more graduate than undergraduate students..." is belied by the numbers presented in support of this statement in the very next sentence. While a decade ago the numbers were almost equal, now the number of undergraduate FTEs exceeds the number of graduate FTEs. Moreover, the University has a stated goal of adding 868 additional undergraduate FTEs without building any more housing for them, other than buildings to replace existing housing reaching the end of its useful life (Spellman Dormitory, for example). If these additional students are not housed on campus, they will most likely be imposed on our neighborhood. Not only is the University changing its basic character from a predominantly graduate to a predominantly undergraduate institution, it seems to be building into its operational plan an expectation the community should underwrite its operation by providing housing for its students and absorbing the impacts that entails.

Respectfully submitted,

Dino Drudi

Dino Drudi, Secretary

Position adopted at the 4 February 2003 meeting appended.

Re: The Catholic University of America (CUA) New Campus Plan
Community Committee meeting suggestions and recommendations

The committee unanimously agrees that the following guarantees must prevail and be enforced by the university if the community is to remain secure, safe, and free of disruptive behaviors.

Sufficient on-campus housing for all upper-classmen who desire to live on campus.

Continue to require under-classmen to live on-campus, with limited exception.

The campus plan envisions 900 + undergraduate students with only 300 surplus spaces and the only new dormitory construction is to replace obsolete buildings, forcing surplus students to be dumped on 5A neighborhoods.

Therefore CUA must commit to building enough housing to accommodate all of its students and CUA must guarantee to taking full responsibility for off-campus behavior.

If these two conditions are not written into the campus plan the neighborhood will be severely disrupted.

Committee Members:

Mary Baird Currie, 5A-06 SMD Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
Dino Drudi, Community Participant
Darcy Flynn, Past 5A-08 SMD Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
Robert Artisst, 5A-08 SMD Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner
Gwendolyn Means, Community Participant
Linda Mines, Community Participant

Submitted by:

Mary Baird Currie, Single Member District 5A-06