ANC 5A ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 5A

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April 15, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE TO 202-727-6072
Original Mailed

Honorable Carol Mitten, Chairperson
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 – Fourth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Ref: Catholic University of America Campus Plan, Case No. 02-20

Dear Chairperson Mitten:

After examining the draft order proposed by the Catholic University of America in this case, we have found a number of overt and potential discrepancies affecting items 4, 31, 32 and page 17. I have prepared a letter, dated April 15, 2003, which is attached. We respectfully request the record in this case be reopened to receive the attached information.

Respectfully Submitted,

Norma M. Broadnax
Chairperson

Attachment

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-20
Exhibit 70

2003 APR 21 PM 4:45
D.C. ZONING COMMISSION

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-20
EXHIBIT NO.70

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April 15, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE TO 202-727-6072
Original Mailed

Honorable Carol Mitten, Chairperson
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Ref.: Catholic University of America Campus Plan, Case No. 02-20

Dear Chairperson Mitten:

After careful review of the draft Catholic University of America proposed campus plan order, ANC 5A strongly objects to the following items:

Item 4 because it does not acknowledge, and it should, ANC 5A support for the bond issue for BZA order No. 16534.

Item 31 because it references broad community input in connection with the preparation of the 2002 campus plan and text on pages 16 and 17 and characterizes discussions with the affected ANCs and community organizations as "adequate". It does not acknowledge the University's refusal to seat ANC 5A's designees even though they had served on the previous campus plan committee. Nor do these references acknowledge how the University incorporated community input.

Item 32 because it references "ANC of record for the main campus, ANC 5C", however, the campus plan covers the entire University, part of which now falls within ANC 5A's territory. Moreover, the Office of Zoning notified both ANC 5A and 5C regarding the campus plan, thereby acknowledging they both are "ANCs of record" entitled to great weight pursuant to the Corporation Counsel's September 16, 1987 Opinion and the DC Court of Appeals ruling in Neighbors United for a Safer Community v Board of Zoning Adjustment No. 91-AA-1009. The

University's proposed order would, in effect, invite the commission to a back door abrogation of these binding legal authorities.

Page 17 of the proposed order asserts the Commission gave great weight to ANC 5A's recommendations. Great weight requires each consideration raised by an ANC to be explicity addressed. The University's draft order does not satisfactorily address how ANC 5A's concerns about how discontinuation of the on-campus housing guarantee coupled with a 900-sutdent increase in undergraduate enrollment are addressed, nor does it fulfill ANC 5A's demand the University commit to continue vigorously enforcing student misconduct sanctions and the Disciplined Properties Program.

Enclosed please also find a copy of a community letter on the above-referenced matter.

Thank you for your kind attention to these concerns. Please call 202-635-6563 if there are questions.

Sincerely,

Norma M. Broadnax

Norma M. Broadnax
Chairperson

Attachment

938 Perry Place, NE.
Washington, DC 20017
7 April 2003

Honorable Carol Mitten, Chairperson
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, NW.
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Catholic University of America Campus Plan, Case No. 02-20

Dear Chairperson Mitten:

I would like to offer the following comments regarding the Catholic University of America's proposed commission order and urge that it be modified to reflect these concerns:

Item 1 makes reference to Monroe Hall as if it still existed, even though this building was demolished several years ago and is now an open lot.

Item 13 makes reference to "eliminating northbound access to Michigan Avenue". Northbound access, however, would be from- not to-Michigan Avenue.

Item 21 merits applause: encouraging the University to perform archeological and historic studies of the kinds described has been a minor objective of the Michigan Park Citizens Association for some time.

Item 27 in tandem with Items 3 and 5, and such references as "continuation of the status quo" on page 17, it unfairly gives the impression the University is continuing the status quo. But the University is not continuing the status quo. The University's discontinuation of the on-campus housing guarantee for juniors and seniors, coupled with the proposed order's admission the University plans to demolish the south campus dormitories Conaty, Spaulding (presently uninhabitable), and Spellman, are departures from the status quo. Only at current actual enrollment and dormitory-availability levels is the de facto status quo maintained because there is a slight surplus of on-campus housing. The University's stated intention of adding 900 undergraduate students and/or demolition of existing dormitories would substantively alter the status quo. The Commission should amend the proposed order to continue the on-campus housing guarantee for all undergraduate students, a long-standing CUA practice, to make the references to the status quo bona fide.

Item 27 makes reference to "CUA's long-standing policy requiring traditional, full-time undergraduate, non-commuter freshman and sophomores to live on campus". The way CUA, however, defines "commuter students" includes any student not living on campus. Thereby CUA terms an undergraduate student,

whose "home" is New York or California but who is living with several other students in an off-campus house in the Brookland neighborhood, as a "commuter student" and allows that student to vote for the "commuter student representatives" in the University's student government. What the University really means to say, instead of "non-commuter freshman and sophomores", I would venture, is "freshman and sophomores who are not living with family or relatives in the Washington metropolitan area". This was the policy when I was a student there and a member of the 1992 campus plan committee a decade ago when all of the University was in ANC 5A.

Item 27 discusses on-campus amenities provided to students. But in order to objectively assess the sufficiency of those amenities, the Commission should require the University to arrange for an arms-length, independent, outside assessment of the students' assessment since it is their perceptions regarding amenities which matter most.

University Vice President Susan Parvi nodded eagerly in response to my exhortation at the hearing that the University commit in the campus plan to continue vigorously enforcing student misconduct sanctions and the Disciplined Properties Program, but Items 27 and 30 fall short of committing to continuing and vigorously enforcing these policies. The Commission should add a sentence explicitly committing the University to continue vigorously enforcing student misconduct sanctions and the Disciplined Properties Program.

Item 29 assumes additional students living off campus consequent to future enrollment growth will be distributed evenly throughout the metropolitan area. There is, however, no justification for this assumption if students who would prefer to live on campus are forced to move off campus consequent to discontinuation of the on-campus housing guarantee. Students who would prefer to live on campus may want to live close to campus activities or not own an automobile. They would be more likely to move close by than students who freely choose to live off campus. The Commission should require this assumption to be justified or delete it from the final order. Alternatively, the Commission could require the University to continue monitoring its off-campus undergraduate students' housing locations and provide for reopening the case before the campus plan's term is up if the assumption proves inaccurate.

I appreciate your attention to these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Dino Drudi

Dino Drudi