02-26

810 New Hampshire Ave.
Washington, D. C. 20037
29 November 2002

Ms. Jerrily Kress
Director, Office of Zoning
441 4th St, NW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Kress:

The proposal by George Washington University to change the agreement with the Foggy Bottom neighborhood regarding the hours and attendance at its Health and Wellness Center should not be changed. I have lived in this neighborhood on and off for thirty years, five years at the above address. As GWU has moved to push students to the extreme edges of its campus it has increased the late night noise (as well as other inconveniences) the tax paying residents have had to endure. Rarely was my sleep disturbed in the early hours of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning until the Howard Johnson Motel was turned into dormitory and two residences on my block were turned into fraternities in the last few years as the student traffic greatly increased.

Now the GWU Health and Wellness Center wants to expand its hours and add to the problem. Adding hours to a gym building that would only increase pedestrian traffic from the various dormitories which have been placed at the edges of the campus. Groups of students or others roaming the neighborhood fresh from a workout at the end of the day generally after midnight as I recall from my own student days is not what a residential enclave needs, wants, or deserves. This was a residential neighborhood many decades ago when GWU pushed its way among us, not something that was desired. They built the Wellness Center knowing what limitations would be placed on it and agreeing to those rules. Until GWU has purchased every home in Foggy Bottom they should learn to live with the situations to which they have agreed.

In addition, as a capitalist and tax payer, I object to a useful service for students being turned into a wide open unfair competition with other gyms and workout centers in the neighborhood. From all appearances the extended hours would turn this appropriate function into a real money maker for the university and take it away from the local businesses. It should be pointed out GWU does not pay taxes on this facility and most of their faculty and staff pay taxes on their salaries to localities other than the DC. What we have here is a long term leaching guest of the rightful citizens of the neighborhood and the city who wants to inflict additional noise on those near by and take money from the pockets of local businesses and city coffers. There is no need to change the current hours or membership limits for the Health and Wellness Center.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

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Respectfully submitted,
Thomas W. Bower
Thomas W. Bower

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-26
EXHIBIT NO.54

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