Nov. 12, 2001
GW Hatchet

BZA bias at HWC

Stephen Alan DARDECK

My wife and I traveled to Washington during Family Weekend to spend time with our son, a GW senior. Among the things I looked forward to included playing racquetball with him at the Health and Wellness Center. He has taken advantage of the facility this year and had described it to me in very positive terms. I also am aware of the separate assessment of $112.50 on our most recent bill, money that is specifically allocated for this facility.

When my son and I went to the Wellness Center to play, we were politely advised that only GW students were permitted to play and family members were not permitted to use the facility. An article addressing the problem was taped to the desk staffed by the students. The article explained that the local Board of Zoning Adjustment had insisted that use of the facility be limited to GW students and other GWorld cardholders.

The article included a quote from anthropology professor Robert Grinkler whose immediate family members apparently had been denied use of the facility. He complained that the University had "not yet acted on its promise to appeal the decision of the local Zoning Board." The article also contained a quote from Assistant Athletic Director Tony Vecchione indicating that this problem is "something we would like to work on."

While I understand there are local political issues the University deals with, I am dumbfounded by zoning regulations that address the class of people permitted to use the facility. Zoning regulates the uses of land and buildings. It appropriately addresses the division of land into use districts according to the character of the land and buildings, the suitability of land and buildings for particular uses and uniformity of use. Zoning regulations do not cannot and should not discriminate against classes of people who use the buildings.

Although my wife and I were not allowed to use the facility, my son was permitted to give us a tour of the facility on Oct. 19. It was sparingly used. Specifically, several racquetball courts were not in use.

It is inconceivable how the use of this facility by immediate family members of GW students could adversely impact the community.

Although this may seem like an insignificant issue in light of the recent tragic events, the opportunity for a 56-year-old father to play racquetball with his 21-year-old son during his senior year in college offered the possibility of a lifetime memory. That possibility was denied Oct. 19.

We plan to visit our son in March and of course we will be present for his graduation in May. I ask GW to take more aggressive action in the interim to remove this unfair and unwarranted use restriction of an otherwise wonderful facility.

–The writer is a GW parent.

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rich tragicomedy of life."
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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-26
Exhibit 39

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-26
EXHIBIT NO.39

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The GW Hatchet Online
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Letter to the Editor: Opening up HWC

I believe the timing of Mr. Dardeck's Nov. 12 letter ("BZA Bias at HWC") could not be better. I agree that restrictions imposed on the use of the Health and Wellness Center are unreasonable. These conditions were created prior to construction of the facility because the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment believed allowing membership to anyone other than students, faculty and staff would cause an "adverse traffic impact" for the neighborhood.

Mr. Dardeck will be glad to know that both the Advisory Neighborhood Commission and the University are now revisiting this matter, and we are optimistic that a positive decision will be reached in the near future.

The Health and Wellness Center is a great resource. Hopefully, the University will be able to extend the benefit of membership to the entire GW family and members of our neighborhood community in the not too distant future.

–Jeff Marootian
graduate student and ANC commissioner

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November 6, 2001

Office of the President
Dr. Stephen Joel Trachtenberg
George Washington University
2121 Eye Street NW, Suite 802
Washington, DC 20052

Dear Dr. Trachtenberg:

I am a recent graduate of GW (2000) who still lives and works in the DC area. During my years of college I spent a good deal of time trying to "give back" to GW in some way or another. I was a cheerleader, on Colonial Cabinet, and very active in the Greek community. My grades earned me a place on the Dean's list each semester and I, in turn, provided peer counseling and tutoring for those having trouble in the business school. I have recently come to a point in my career where the salary coming in is more than sufficient to cover the expenses going out, and I feel as though I owe this in some part to the university which I attended. I was planning on pledging something to the Centuries Campaign at year-end to kind of show my appreciation (and get a tax write off).

Last weekend, however, I was in town to watch my fraternity's intramural soccer game and was denied admittance to the Health and Wellness Center because of my alumni status. This was not a situation in which I was dressed to work out or be involved in a sport. I was told this was due to a District of Columbia Zoning regulation, but in my attempts to substantiate this, the D.C. Office of zoning contends that no such regulation exists.

I would think that this building was, in fact, constructed using some form of alumni contributions, even if in the form of fees charged to us while we were in school and, therefore, should at least be allowed to be seen by those who assisted in its financing. I have to wonder what is next, will we be allowed to attend basketball games or visit the dorms or use the Hippodrome; are all of the things we contributed to purely for the benefit of current students?

The fact of the matter is, being able to use the Health and Wellness Center will make no difference in my life. It is the underlying principle of the matter that I am upset with. I have gone from being GW's biggest proponent to realizing that GW has no care or use for me once they lock me in and take my money. Now I face two key dilemmas: first, I was

planning on enrolling in the MBA program next fall and second, my little brother will be attending GW this spring. Can I, in good conscious, recommend to my brother that he attend a school that will treat him as a number once his tuition bill is paid? This leaves me at a loss for words, since I have been so high on GW for the past six years.

My complaints are not empty. I would like nothing more than for GW to improve as a university and am willing to do my part to make it happen, but not when all I am good for is my money and when, no matter how much I give I'm not worth talking to unless it is about giving more. I would like to see graduates of GW be more of a "family," much like graduates of more prestigious universities. The problem is, the first step has to be made by the school and alumni must be made to feel proud of where they went and welcome when they go back. If this happens, I feel your endowment goals will be easily met and the ranking of the school will rise. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Diego McDonald

900 North Randolph Street
Apartment 1602
Arlington, VA 22203
(202) 422-3625

June 4, 2001

Dr. Stephen Joel Trachtenberg
President
George Washington University
2121 I Street, N.W., Suite 802
Washington, D.C. 20052

Dear Dr. Trachtenberg:

We, the undersigned, are writing to elicit your assistance in a matter that is of great importance to us both individually and as a group.

We are participants in a water aerobics class sponsored by George Washington University (GWU) and held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the Smith Center. This class has been in existence for at least twelve years and many of us have been in it since its inception.

When arrangements were underway for the building of the new Wellness Center, we were advised that our class would be moved there upon the completion of that facility. We have since been told that a zoning law has been issued limiting the use of the Wellness Center to GWU faculty and staff. Even our GWU alumni will be unable to use the Wellness Center.

We are sure this situation is as distressing for you as it is for us but now we are faced with the possibility of our class being disbanded unless it is kept on at the Smith Center.

Over the years our group, which has always had a preponderance of senior citizens, has experienced an increase in the ailments that brought many of us to the program in the first place – arthritis, the onset of osteoporosis, knee and back surgery post-op therapy, etc. Most of us are participating on the advice of our doctors as a way to maintain our health and mobility. It is quite an experience to see members walk in with canes and be transformed into poster people for physical fitness once they hit the water!

In addition to the seniors in our group (ranging in age from 60 to 91) we have quite a few younger people. This, plus the relationship we've established with GWU students in the locker rooms who have classes before and after ours, has provided us with a delightful inter-generational link.

This is but a limited description of what our water aerobics class means to us and what a devastating blow it would be to us if we were unable to continue it. Therefore, Dr. Trachtenberg, we are asking your help and influence in seeing that our classes at the Smith Center continue as they have for these many years.

To say you would have our gratitude would be an understatement.

Sincerely,

Nadia Hammond

The George Washington University
WASHINGTON DC

THE PRESIDENT

To: SJT 9/19/01

Fr: RF

I have an interesting message on my Voice Mail for you to listen to — from Ivan Scott, Pentagon correspondent for WTOP & other stations. He & his wife live in Columbia Plaza & they'd very much like to use the Health & Wellness facility. He wonders whether there can be a waiver or exception made for the neighbor restriction on membership. Mailing address: P.O. Box 9550 DC 20016

(He's a resident of The Baron at 500 23rd St in Columbia Plaza.)

2121 EYE STREET, N.W. • WASHINGTON, DC 20052 • (202) 994-6500 • FAX (202) 994-0654

Donald C. Morency
2500 Virginia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037

November 20, 2002

To: Chairwoman Carol J. Mitten, District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Vice Chairman, Anthony Hood, District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Commissioner James Hannahan, District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Commissioner Peter May, District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Commissioner John Parsons, District of Columbia Zoning Commission

From: Donald C. Morency, former Commissioner ANC 2A04

Subject: Case #0226 – request for relief from Order #15942 to permit use of The George Washington University Health & Wellness Center by ANC 2A residents

1. I strongly recommend your approval of relief from order #15942 sought by The George Washington University to allow the residents of ANC 2A to utilize their Health and Wellness Center facilities. It is a state-of-the-art facility which the University wants to share with the community and which the residents would welcome as an opportunity to establish and maintain fitness programs.

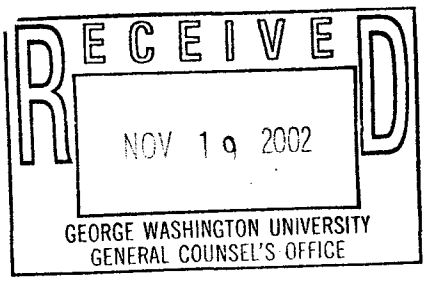
2. As a resident of Foggy Bottom for 33 years and former Commissioner for ANC 2A04, a significant number of the residents who were in my constituency have been eager to see the facility opened up to the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. With the backing of residents from the Watergate, Potomac Plaza and St. Mary's Court, another commissioner and I were in consultation with the University this year to surface the issue and seek relief from Order #15942 and open up the Health and Wellness Center for use by ANC 2A community.

3. The original rationale behind the restrictive use to faculty and students alone was based on traffic congestion and noise, both of which have proven to be non-issues. It was thought that there would be a significant increase in traffic in and around the facility, but history has shown that it is practically all foot traffic; furthermore, there are no places to park and there is a metro stop less than a block from the facility. As for the increase in noise level, I have been walking around the area on a regular basis since the Center opened, and there is no noise emanating from the well-insulated building nor are there any gatherings of groups of people outside the Center that would add to the noise level. Students go to the facility to work out and when they leave they are tired and head to their residences. It is not a place where people hang out.

4. Given the high usage of the facility by the faculty and students, those residents whom I mentioned above have no objection to extending the hours of the Center to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to avail themselves of the Center's equipment and facilities. As a matter of fact, it's a shame that this high tech facility is not open longer hours so that more people can benefit from it.

5. With a world of increasingly obese people and with government and the medical community encouraging people to engage in regular fitness programs for healthier living, your approval to open up this facility to the local community with increased hours of operation would be a positive step towards a better quality of life for our residents.





ST. MARY'S COURT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
725 - 24th St., N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20037 • Tel: (202) 223-5712 • Fax: (202) 223-6191

November 14, 2002

John Fondersmith
Development Review Specialist
D.C. Office of Planning, 4th Floor
801 North Capitol Street N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 02-26

Dear Mr. Fondersmith:

St. Mary's Court is a 140 unit Senior Community Residence located at 725 – 24th Street N.W., adjacent to The George Washington University's Health and Wellness Center. In 1998, the undersigned appeared before the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment ("BZA") to support the University's request for the zoning relief necessary to develop this facility. We are pleased that the BZA subsequently granted that relief but were disappointed that it decided to limit the people who could use the Center to the students, faculty and staff of the University's Foggy Bottom Campus.

I now understand that the University has asked the D.C. Zoning Commission to discontinue that limitation so to allow the University to extend use privileges to the residents of St. Mary's Court. We fully support this request. The University has developed a marvelous and useful Health Center that can be of significant value to our residents. Many members of our community have expressed a strong desire to participate in the aquatic, aerobic and recreational activities that are available. In the three years that the Health and Wellness Center has been open, we have noticed no adverse traffic and parking impacts to our neighborhood resulting from the development of this Center. Nor do we anticipate any, should the Zoning Commission agree to allow our residents access to the neighboring Center.

Our representative plans to appear at the December 2, 2002 Public Hearing to express these thoughts. We are hopeful that the Office of Planning will recognize the value of this important facility to our institution and will recommend the approval of the zoning relief that the University requests. I am available to address any questions that you may have at telephone (202) 223-5712.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Watson

Beatrice Watson
Administrator

November 13, 2002

John Fondersmith
Development Review Specialist
D.C. Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Fourth Floor
Washington, D.C. 2002

Re: Zoning Commission Case No. 02-26

Dear Mr. Fondersmith:

The Remington is a 52 unit Condominium facility located at 601 24th Street, N.W., across G Street from the George Washington University's Health and Wellness Center. In 1998, the undersigned appeared before the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment ("BZA") to support the University's request for the zoning relief necessary to develop this facility. We were pleased that the BZA subsequently granted that relief but were disappointed that it decided to limit the people who could use the center to the students, faculty and staff of the University's Foggy Bottom Campus.

I now understand that the University has asked the D.C. Zoning Commission to discontinue that limitation so as to allow the University to extend use privileges to the residents of The Remington. We fully support this request. The University has developed a marvelous and useful health center that can be of significant value to our condominium residence. Many here have

expressed a strong desire to participate in the aquatic, aerobic and recreational facilities that are conveniently available. We do not anticipate any traffic or parking impact to our neighborhood should the Zoning Commission agree to allow our residents access to the neighboring center.

Our representative plans to appear at the December 2, 2002 public hearing to express these thoughts. We are hopeful that the Office of Planning will recognize the value of this important facility to our institution and will recommend the approval of the zoning relief that the University requests. I am available to address any questions that you may have at (202) 223-2412.

Thank you.

Rosemary Jarvis
Remington Condomium
President