02-24

May 11, 2004

Ms. Carol J. Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission for the
District of Columbia
441 Fourth Street NW, Suite 225
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Proposal for Foggy Bottom Community Residents to use The George Washington University Lerner Health and Wellness Facility

As Foggy Bottom Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner for ANC 2A01 I support the proposal drafted by Cynthia G. Jachles. I have testified before the Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia previously, to lend my support for opening up the Wellness Center to local residents.

Ms. Jachles has proposed access for an even narrower population who could benefit from using the facility. The usual community opposition has been to excessive parking, late-night student noise, and an unpredictable loss of quality of life due to immature students.

The Jachles proposal mutes that opposition by limiting the Wellness Center's use to mature professionals who do not pose a threat to quality of life in the neighborhood. If anything, they bring an adult presence into the exercise arena, potentially having the benefits of inhibiting college-type pranks or even rowdiness.

I am familiar with the issue of whether the people who attend the GWU Lerner Wellness Center would otherwise attend a Gold's gym, or the like. My observation is that NGO workers, non-profit employees, and retirees on fixed income are not the patrons who would otherwise attend expensive private clubs. The access to the Wellness Center is a step towards enhancing the health of people who may well be unable to attend any health facility. That is a policy I support and I hope the Zoning Commission will endorse in this limited application.

I would note that my opinion is limited to my role as ANC Commissioner for ANC 2A01. The full ANC has not voted on this proposal. I continue my previous position of support for opening the Wellness Center. The Jachles proposal is so limited in scope, I believe it renders moot previous concerns about impacting the neighborhood in a negative manner.

Sincerely Yours,

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ANC 2A01 Commissioner
For Foggy Bottom
(202) 366-0994

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 02-24
EXHIBIT NO. 78

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-26
EXHIBIT NO.78