Blaise A. Rhodes
3016 Ferndale Street
Kensington, MD 20895

May 16, 2003

Ms. Carol Mitten, Chair
D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Ms. Mitten,

Although canoe racing and rowing seem to have much in common, besides the fact that rivers and lakes are attractive to both sports, the similarities end there.

My Dad was an oarsman for several years, during the time that Granville Goode of Potomac Boat Club was America's single scull champion, Dad eventually joined the Washington Canoe Club and became proficient in canoeing. There he brought my siblings and me to learn the arts of canoeing and kayaking and where we found such wonderful companionships over those many years.

The explanation for the different choices between rowing and canoeing is the type of disciplines. Rowing, according to my Dad, required more intense coaching, more attention to specialized equipment, sliding seats, foot stirrups, as well as care to boat (shell), oar locks, riggers, etc. Canoes are simpler to maintain, easier to transport, and less expensive.

There is mutual respect among oars people and canoeists because they struggle against the water resistance to their efforts whether with oar or paddle, they strain their muscles against currents and they must maintain balance and rhythm as they endure the agony of total expenditure of body and spirits in their efforts to win. But on the docks and sometimes on the water the canoeing people are a nuisance to oars people—they get in the way of those carrying the 8-oar shells on the docks and compete for space on the water. Canoeists traditionally give way to the shells and if they do not, the result can be embarrassing or even disastrous. A fast moving shell can smash through a canoe and in turn, the oars can catch "crabs", get broken and people can get hurt.

On the upriver Potomac, where Potomac Boat Club and Washington Canoe Club are located the shells have the "right of way" along the Virginia shoreline (across the River from W.C.C. docks) and the canoes practice and put on regattas along the D.C. shore; just where the Georgetown University float will intrude across the course. Oars powered crews will have to propel their crafts directly across the canoeists' course, a constant irritation and danger.

I am not as conversant with the rowing situation vs. canoeing as my father, 'Dusty' Rhodes, who is considered by some as Historian of the W.C.C. I am a Past President of W.C.C. as is my father. My dad also served as Commodore of the American Canoe Association and has attended hundreds of regattas in Canada and the United States. He has been acquainted with rowing and paddling in various localities and says that rowing and paddling do not co-exist in situations where they compete with each

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other in too close proximity. It is for this reason that canoeists resigned from P.B.C. in 1904 and built W.C.C. He notes that he observed similar situations in Boston (Charles River), in Toronto, on the Schuykill in Philadelphia where the canoeists moved up-river to Wissahickon to be clear of Boat House Row at Fairmont Park. He observed rowing clubs in Germany, in Australia, etc. He is convinced that rowing and canoeing clubs are not compatible—especially in close proximity to one another. The distance between W.C.C. and P.B.C. is ideal for both clubs. The closeness of the proposed structure of Georgetown to W.C.C. is certain to cause friction and possibly lead to dissolution of the Washington Canoe Club.

Therefore, I am strenuously opposed to Georgetown's current plans for building close to our club house and hope that they will find another spot for their building. I certainly wish them well but hope that they will decide to leave us in peace where our Club has existed for the past 100 years.

Please don't change the zoning.

Sincerely,



Blaise A. Rhodes