May 16, 2003

Ms. Carol Mitten, Chairperson
Zoning Commission
District of Columbia
441-4th St, NW – Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Cases 02-30 and 02-31

Dear Commissioners:

For the past twelve years our family of five residents of the District of Columbia (two parents and three children), four of whom are voters, have been actively involved in high school crew. We strongly support this activity because we have seen what a positive opportunity it provides the District's children as well as being an excellent use of our urban waterfronts both on the Potomac and on the Anacostia Rivers. Our family strongly supports the zoning changes noted above that would allow Georgetown University to build a new boathouse. We also support the use of Thompson's Boat Center as a rowing facility and encourage the construction of additional boathouses on the Potomac and on the Anacostia.

Our family is completing nine years of rowing with the Wilson High School crew program this spring. Wilson is rowing its nineteenth year as the only public high school program in the District. We receive no support from the District of Columbia School system. With over 200 District citizens involved in the Wilson Crew we are constantly working to raise money to support this program. Five of our six coaches are also District residents.

Rowing has grown rapidly over the past decade both among area high schools and among individual citizens and the local collegiate programs. Unfortunately, facilities for these rowers have not kept pace with this growth and will soon be reduced with the loss of the "compound" at Thompson's to the Swedish embassy construction. High school rowing here is currently capped. Existing programs cannot expand their fleets because there are no racks to store them nor can new programs offer crew to their students. Athletes in the District are being turned away because there are only so many seats available in the existing boats.

We have looked forward to the new Georgetown boathouse because that will allow some boats to move up river. However, this one new boathouse will only slightly relieve the overcrowding. The new Georgetown boathouse will occupy a piece of National Park Service land next to the Washington Canoe Club. This is only a small part of the two-mile park which runs along the Potomac shore from the Key Bridge to Fletcher's. The meetings and negotiations over the years have clearly established that this is the best location for the Georgetown University boathouse.

We urge you to support the proposed zoning changes 02-30 and 02-31.

Sincerely,

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-30
Exhibit 217

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-30
EXHIBIT NO.217