May 31, 2003

Zoning Commission
Carol Mitten, Chair
441 4th St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case #02-30, Georgetown University Boathouse

Dear Commission Members:

I am a parent of a rower for Wilson High School. I urge your approval of the zoning for Georgetown University's boathouse for its rowing program.

The interests of all rowing programs are intertwined. The construction of Georgetown University's boathouse is crucial to the health of the high school rowing programs. At Thompson Boat Center 60 rowing shells are stored in an outdoor, fenced-in compound. Most of these boats are used by high school crews. This space will soon go away because of the construction of a new Swedish Embassy. The high school teams will then need a place to store their shells. When Georgetown University leaves Thompson's, significant space will be opened up for these shells.

Planning for the Georgetown University boathouse has been exposed to public scrutiny and discussion for the past five years as part of the much-desired Georgetown Waterfront Park. The 1989 designation of a boathouse zone, including the site for the new Georgetown University boathouse, was frequently discussed. That site throughout was treated as a viable and appropriate location for a new boathouse.

The sport of rowing has grown enormously since the 1989 plans were developed and even since the Georgetown Waterfront Commission began its work. Now, there are four collegiate programs and 13 high school programs plus hundreds of adults rowing as individuals or with clubs at Thompson Boat Center and at the Potomac Boat Club. A conservative estimate of the number of District residents participating directly in rowing activities on the Potomac is 1500. The total number, including rowers from surrounding jurisdictions, is closer to 2000, with 800 high school students alone.

The current plan is endorsed by the Georgetown Waterfront Commission, the National Park Service, and the local ANC. It calls for construction of the Georgetown University boathouse first, a boathouse for George Washington University next, and then a boathouse for smaller craft near where Jack's boathouse is now. Thompson Boat Center will then be renovated to accommodate 8-person shells throughout and will become the primary home for high school crews. The new boathouses will occupy three of the four sites designated for boathouses in the planned boathouse zone of the Georgetown Waterfront Park.

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Exhibit 259

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Because this information has been published and publicly debated over so many years, it is most unfortunate that objections are raised at the eleventh hour by canoe enthusiasts who feel that they will be inconvenienced by these plans. The Georgetown Waterfront Park has been decades in the making, and many sectors of our community want to see it succeed. Rowing has been an integral part of the vision for that park from its inception. It is time to move forward with the Park, and the next step should be your approval of the zoning for Georgetown University's boathouse.

Sincerely yours,

D. E. Farley

Dennis E. Farley
2015 Belmont Rd. NW
Washington, DC 20009