Good evening,

My name is Blaise Rhodes. I have paddled the Potomac for over 20 years. My father rowed and paddled on the Potomac since 1930.

I'm a member of the historic Washington Canoe Club, which was originally not opposed to the Georgetown boathouse project. While President of WCC, from 1993 to 1997, I met with Tony Johnson several times. He impressed me with GU's plans. I created a WCC committee that supported the Potomac Waterfront Commission. In 1997, Mr. Georgetown assured us that the Boathouse project "did not intend to overwhelm the Club's structure in any way." This boathouse was to be "proportional" to the other boathouses on the river.

Well, we've been disappointed. Despite assurances to the contrary, GU plans a facility the size of a football field. We were originally shown drawings from a perspective that made the new boathouse appear roughly the same size as ours. Even on May 12th, Mr. Parsons stated that the "building is in keeping with the residential scale of other buildings along this portion of the Georgetown waterfront." I'm not sure which buildings he refers to. When we saw the actual dimensions at a meeting in December 2002, they were a shock. One of our members said something about a whale swallowing a fish.

I'm not an architect, but when someone uses words like proportional, I think 1 to 1. Not 7 to 1. By clever word-smithing and significant omissions in communication, we were grossly misled.

In a recent letter, Mr. Parsons states, "Every effort has been made to control the scale of this building given the FEMA requirements for the second floor to be above the 100 year flood elevation, as well as the programmatic requirements of boathouses of this type." This argument is a stretch. Certainly this building will dwarf everything near the Key Bridge.

I worry now, given the "give them an inch, they take a mile" attitude we've seen, what will occur once the building is complete?

Mr. Johnston has stated that GU intends this building to stand for 100 years. He also has responded to several concerns by saying "we'll just have to learn to share, etc…" The Washington Canoe Club existed where it is for 100 years. We worry about having to work out issues with those who have not been upfront with us.

Please do not allow this boathouse to be built as proposed.

Thank you.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-30
Exhibit 305

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