GEORGETOWN WATERFRONT PARK

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Lawrence Wilker
President, Kennedy Center
for the Performing Arts

June 3, 2003

02-30

Ms. Carol J. Mitten, Chair
Zoning Commission
D.C. Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chairman Mitten,

As Chair of the Georgetown Waterfront Park Commission since its inception in 1997, I would like to address you and your fellow commissioners about the long planned Georgetown University boathouse which has been the subject of much debate recently. Several groups have challenged the University's right to build a large structure for use by a private institution on National Park Service land. These people have also called into question the environmental impact of this facility.

Most of these issues have been raised and answered during the approval process that Georgetown University has gone through over a ten year period The University originally bought a one acre piece of land from CSX Railroad one mile upstream from the present site in 1992. Included in the deal was a right of way for vehicular access to the site along the CSX roadbed, now the Capital Crescent Trail. The University and the National Park Service agreed that a land swap would be a less intrusive alternative to using the original site. The land exchange was approved by ANC 2-E, the National Capital Planning Commission and the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board in the fall of 1995.

The environmental questions were addressed by the Army Corps of Engineers which concluded that the "wetlands" existing on this piece of land were created by the nearby C & O Canal leaking and the water being dammed up by the 84 inch subsurface sewer line. While views will be obstructed by the boathouse roofline during the winter months, the views of the Potomac at this point are obscured by dense tree foliage during the rest of the year.

Georgetown University hired a distinguished architect, Stephen Muse, to design a handsome boathouse in the shingle style of the

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Exhibit 319

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late nineteenth century with echoes of the great boathouses on the Charles and Schulkyl Rivers. The 292 foot long structure is divided into three bays and is handsomely adorned with porches and arcades to create the feel of a residential structure. The boathouse design was approved by ANC 2-E in September, 2001 and subsequently by the Old Georgetown Board and the Commission of Fine Arts.

All of these issues were discussed numerous times in regular public meetings over the years at the Waterfront Commission. These meetings, held at St John's Church in Georgetown, were advertised in local papers and were attended by citizens from the entire metropolitan community, including a healthy representation of residents of Maryland and Virginia. Attendees were encouraged to sign up for the mailing list to receive minutes and notices of the meetings.

I do hope you and the members of the Commission will see this magnificent boathouse as the result of a process involving the entire community over a 6 year period and will agree to the zoning requirements necessary to allow the University to move ahead with its plans.

Sincerely yours,

Charles H. Percy

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