Friday, June 13, 2003

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Ms. Carol Mitten
Chair, Washington DC Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, NW
Suite 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

2003 JUN 17 PM 3:30
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Dear Commissioner Mitten:

I write to you today in support of Case # 02-30, the Georgetown University Boathouse, which is scheduled to come up for consideration before the Commission on June 5th, 2003. The Boathouse project will be a tremendous boon to the community that will enhance recreational opportunities for all Washingtonians, and I strongly encourage the Commission to give the project its approval.

First, by approving the Boathouse proposal, the Commission will add a great resource to the DC community. Allowing the Boathouse to be constructed will allow a land exchange between Georgetown and the National Park Service to go forward, which will forever protect the Potomac Palisades from development. Allowing the Boathouse to go forward will also result in Georgetown surrendering a one-mile right-of-way along the Capital Crescent Trail, which will further protect that recreational treasure from encroachment.

Second, allowing the boathouse to be built will increase opportunities for recreation on the Potomac River. The sport of rowing has become increasingly attractive to people over the past decade because it is environmentally sensitive, universally, and physically demanding. Presently, there is more demand for rowing than can be accommodated by the present boathouses on the Potomac. The private Potomac Boat Club is oversubscribed and has a waiting list for membership. The only public facility on the river is Thompson's Boat Center, where Georgetown occupies two of the eight available bays. This has forced some community groups to store their shells outside, exposing the boats to risks of theft, vandalism, and damage.

The enormous demand for additional space for rowing facilities, which will be exacerbated by the loss of the outdoor storage compound at Thompson's when the construction of the proposed Swedish Embassy begins, requires that this new facility be built. By allowing Georgetown to construct its boathouse, there will be less congestion at Thompson's. Further, the indoor rowing tank will be a great addition to the local rowing community and will be made available to other users, which will also allow more people to use the Potomac from that location.

Allowing the Boathouse to be built will be fabulous addition to complement Potomac Boat Club and Washington Canoe Club. How wonderful it will be to have such a beautiful addition to the landscape of the Potomac as one crosses key bridge! Georgetown has long dreamed of constructing a new boathouse on the Potomac and making this possible. This new boathouse represents Georgetown's support of the community as the university alone is willing to bear the cost of constructing an aesthetically-pleasing facility that will serve its greater community and will stand the test of time. I urge the Commission to approve the proposed boathouse at its June 5th meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Russell Smith

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-30
Exhibit 331

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-30
EXHIBIT NO.331