**D.C. Zoning Commission Hearing 6/19/03 Cases # 0230 & 0231**

My name is Linda Brackett. I live at 1544 44th Street NW in the District. My neighborhood is bordered by Glover Archbold Park and the Chesapeake & Ohio National Historic Park. I use one or both of these parks daily. I enjoy the woods and water, and usually walk, but, yes, often just sit, listen, and look. I have no quarrel with boating, and appreciate the value of crew for young people, but not at the expense of the loss of undeveloped park land for others like me, who cherish the quiet it provides.

The C & O National Historic Park is dedicated to U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who worked for many years to ensure that all could enjoy its riches - not just those who could afford a boat Georgetown University wishes to build a boathouse on a park land site. The boathouse would host, not the estimated two to three million visits made by the public to this segment of the park each year, but 200 undergraduate rowers. The designated site is the point at which the park land commences to be wild. It contains flood plain, wetland, and a diversity of habitats which nurture a corresponding diversity of flora and fauna.

Justice Douglas was sensitive to the fact that such areas are both fragile and irreplaceable, particularly when located, as this one is, in the midst of a highly urbanized community. To allow development of this land would have horrified him. It would also violate both the Organic Act of 1916, which charged the National Park Service with maintaining the parks "unimpaired for future generations," and the paragraph in the current National Capital Planning Commission's Comprehensive Plan which reads in part "The narrow threads of natural green areas throughout the District . . . should be protected and maintained."

In 1954 pressure was intense to use the C & O park land, purchased in 1938 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, for an automotive parkway. This position was supported by the Washington Post. Justice Douglas invited the Post editors to walk the towpath with him. In his invitation he stated that "Fishermen, hunters, hikers, campers, . . . and others are opposed to making a highway out of this sanctuary." The editors and Justice Douglas then hiked the towpath together. The result was the newspaper's acknowledgment that

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a "parkway would be a much bigger undertaking than we had supposed." A consequent shift in planning and policy then led to developing the park as we know it today - a unique stretch of protected land parallel to the Potomac River containing the historic Chesapeake and Ohio canal, towpath and a variety of geological and historical riches.

My hope is that the Zoning Commission will also visit the site in question in order to evaluate first hand what would be lost should it be developed in any way. There must be a way to "Just Say No," both to this boathouse project as it is, and to what it represents, as a dangerous example/precedent of encroachment upon a national treasure in pursuit of private gain.

Thank you.

Linda Brackett June 19, 2003

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