02-30

June 19, 2003

Esteemed Commissioners:

My testimony addresses my concerns as one who walks and bicycles on the Potomac Crescent Trail and the C & O tow path and enjoys access to the river by a canoe kept at the Washington Canoe Club (WCC). I do not paddle competitively. I do row out of Thompson's Boat House occasionally.

I have had the opportunity to observe the usage and traffic in the area for many years, at different times of day and the week. On weekends, the waterfront area from Thompson's Boat House to the WCC is always crowded. When regattas are held, traffic is quite snarled by trailers loaded with eight man shells making their way off the G.W. Parkway into the narrow confines of the waterfront. Regattas are held on weekends, and numerous schools compete, resulting in many long craft entering a congested area, as well as many cars seeking parking.

Georgetown University's (GU) boat house has no provision for parking and it seems no one has addressed even a place to turn around or unload. Where will the trailers unload the visiting schools' eights? Will crews unload their shells far away and walk their very fragile boats to the GU boat dock? What if someone leaves his car or truck for "just a moment" in the loading area? Whose job will it be to police this area?

The space behind the WCC where the Crescent Trail is accessed from Georgetown is very narrow and not capable of much widening. GU will need to have the boat club's garbage removed, its rowing tanks serviced, food catered for events, repairmen provided access, students and fans bused in. What will happen to the throng of users of the Crescent Trail on a beautiful Saturday morning when all of Washington seems to be out walking, roller blading and biking, and it's regatta day too, with long eights coming down the already crowded path?

It can't be in the public's interest to have the kind of foot and vehicular traffic that will result. Regardless of the many years of efforts spent arriving at a plan for the Georgetown waterfront park, those planners have surely not been given enough facts or they would realize the traffic headaches the GU Boat House will cause, and oppose it vigorously. The Potomac riverfront can provide a better location for these long, unwieldy boats than at the narrowest end of K Street, requiring transit through the overcrowded streets of Georgetown to reach it. Please don't allow this zoning request to be approved – we all will suffer if it is.

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ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-30
Exhibit 349

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