816 E Street, S.E.
Washington, DC 20003
May 20, 2003

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D.C. ZONING COMMISSION

Ms. Carol Mitten
Chair, D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th St., N.W., Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Case 02-31

Dear Ms. Mitten:

I am writing to ask the Zoning Commission to carefully consider the wording it is being asked to use to define "boathouse" in Case 12-31 brought by Georgetown University.

1. The purpose of a boathouse is to store, launch, clean, maintain, and possibly repair boats. It can service either motorized or non-motorized boats. It may contain a locker room, restrooms, and other facilities directly related to preparing for (or recovering from) recreational or competitive boating. I can even understand a kitchen in a boathouse, since most facilities of this type are at some point used for social gatherings.

A boathouse generally does not include an exercise room and a rowing tank, which are more appropriate for a rowing or sculling training facility than a boathouse. I believe the petitioners have been a bit disingenuous in trying to sneak these items into the general zoning definition, and I hope you will disallow them.

Each additional facility such as an exercise room and rowing tank increases the potential size of a boathouse – the rowing tank especially so – and I would hate to see large, monstrous buildings allowed to be constructed along the delicate shores of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, for both environmental and aesthetic reasons. In the Georgetown University case, for example, such facilities could be located on campus, thus sparing users of the river and riverbank from views resembling those seen through the large windows of local gyms. Are gyms really in keeping with plans for the waterfront?

Second, I would be very disappointed if the definition of boathouses to be considered for construction in Washington, DC, were restricted to those for the use of private, university, or other special interest groups, as requested by the petitioner. In fact, in many cases those uses would fit more appropriately under "boat clubs," which I believe is among the current definitions.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 02-31
Exhibit 113

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.02-31
EXHIBIT NO.113

The definition should allow for the possibility of boathouses intended for public use potentially including but not limited to the public rental of non-motorized craft.

Thank you for considering these matters.

Sincerely,

Amber L. Jones

Amber Jones