TESTIMONY OF ERIN MCKEON

Capital Yacht Club
1000 Water Street, NW
Washington DC 20024

RE: Proposed W-0 Open Space Zone, Case 02-42

My name is Erin McKeon, a member of the Capital Yacht Club in Washington, DC.

Let me begin by stressing that constructive changes to the Washington waterfront are both welcome and necessary. As a 111-year old historic institution on the Washington Waterfront, Capital Yacht Club has been a constructive player in many generations of change. We hope to do so again but our community has concerns about the manner in which the waterfront is being altered.

The proposed text amendment creating a W-0 Open Space Zone appears to be a useful tool for use as part of the Anacostia Watershed Initiative. However, there are several aspects of the proposal that seem inconsistent with the stated intent of the proposal to "provide a low density, low intensity zone". These inconsistencies and a December 2002 memo from the Office of Planning that indicate an intent to apply this new Open Space Zone to the SW Washington Waterfront.

We can see no reason why a low density W-0 Open Space Zone should be used in an area where it is clear that the proposed re-development of the SW waterfront will require a much higher density that currently allowed by the area's current zoning of W-0. This question prompted us to undertake a legal analysis of the proposed regulations. We established that 11 DCMR 917.1 gives the Board of Zoning Adjustment or the Zoning Commission absolute discretion in granting special exceptions in the W-0 Open Space Zone. While we can understand the need for a mechanism to grant special exceptions, there appears to be few uses for which special exceptions may be granted that are not already prohibited in a waterfront zone by 11 DCMR 902.1.

Of particular interest are the special exceptions that would allow a fishmonger or floating homes. Why would such special exceptions be necessary unless there really was an intention to apply the W-0 Open Space Zone to the SW Washington waterfront, the only place in the District of Columbia where fishmongers and floating homes can be found?

While we would like to believe in the integrity of both those in the Office of Planning and Zoning Commission, we believe that it is foolish to create a situation where these groups have total discretion in granting special exceptions.

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in a W-0 Open Space Zone that would allow activities that are inconsistent with the concept of creating open space. The idea that the SW Washington waterfront could possibly be designated a W-0 Open Space Zone is completely inconsistent with the well known intentions to re-develop the area and create a much higher density than its current W-1 zoning.

Thank you for your time and attention to these concerns.

Erin McMeen