John A. Boardman
Executive Secretary Treasurer
Hotel & Restaurant Employees, Local 25 AFL-CIO

Testimony
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
Monday, March 01, 2004

Case Number 03-16 Monument Residential LLC - Watergate

Good Evening Zoning Commission members and fellow citizens. My name is John Boardman and I am Executive Secretary-Treasurer of Hotel & Restaurant Employees, Local 25 AFL-CIO representing 8,000 working men and women in the hospitality industry.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today regarding your consideration of The Watergate ~~Hotel~~. You will hear or have heard many important legal, economic and other arguments as to why this historic property must be maintained in its current status – as a hotel. I hope to provide you with a measure of understanding of some of the social impact or human consequences of your decision.

First, as many of you may know, Local 25 in this forum and others has consistently advocated for a comprehensive approach to economic development in the District. That view has espoused the notion that economic development can not

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-16
Exhibit 125

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-16
EXHIBIT NO.125

rest on a single variable in a project. One can't or shouldn't simply say that a project creates "jobs" and is therefore "good." You really need to know what kind of jobs and whether those jobs are a burden on or a contributing factor to the Districts economy. Likewise, we believe that the same standard needs to be applied on a project basis. For instance, you shouldn't only be considering tax revenue generation when looking at this decision. I guess that's why we have a comprehensive planning process.

Our view has been that there is and should be a vital roll for government and its agencies to help weave a social fabric that maximizes the *comprehensive* return to all citizens of the District when applying economic development policy. In the instant case that would be saying that zoning decisions like this one affecting the Watergate Hotel ought to be viewed from a "comprehensive" standard. Zoning if done well not only looks at a given plot or parcel but the interaction of the composition of that parcel with those around it and the City in which it sits. It is from this view that we ask your specific consideration of the following.

The Watergate Hotel has been an important component of the hospitality industry in the District. It is a recognizable brand with historical significance. More importantly, it has for thirty years provided a sound base of employment for the working middle-class of the District. Make no mistake, The Watergate Hotel employees are middle class. The 114 members of Local 25 at the hotel have living wages. Those workers enjoy benefits such as employer paid full family healthcare, dental care, optical care and pensions to name a just a few things. They have supported families, bought homes and put kids through college with their jobs at the Watergate. The three workers behind me who live here in the District have invested years of service in this luxury property. Robert Adejayan has worked thirty years maintaining the shine in the public spaces. Delores Mitchell has worked for 25 years answering the phones with a smile you can hear. Delores covers her deaf son on her health care while he goes to school out of state. Genet Hunegnaw is a housekeeper and has been preparing guests rooms for 17 years. Robert, Delores and Genet are examples of District workers at the Watergate Hotel where the *average* number of years of service across Local 25's

membership is more than 20. The thought that these hard working men and women are just going to "be absorbed" elsewhere at this stage in their careers by the District hotel industry is ludicrous – and heartless. Local 25 still has more than 8% of its membership waiting to return to full employment following 9/11 tragedy. The hospitality industry unemployment rate is three percentage points higher than the unemployment rate generally. These workers and the others at the Watergate will not "be absorbed" they will be unemployed. And, candidly, because of their ages they will likely never work again.

Let me make one other brief point if I may. The District will need these hotel rooms. We just funded and built a new convention center with the hope that in a few years we would have new hotels providing District residents with employment opportunities. In fact, the District is investing hundreds of millions of dollars to increase the down stream hotel room inventory. I ask you: Does it really makes sense to have one branch of the government investing taxpayer dollars to build needed hotel facilities and another branch closing them?

Let me close by thanking you for this opportunity. I hope that you will choose to protect the jobs of Robert, Delores and Genet and those of all the Watergate Hotel workers. I have attached a petition from them. I hope you'll take a moment to read the petition and look at the tenure of these workers. The Watergate Hotel jobs can not be "shipped overseas." They can be destroyed though. Jobs like these are, in fact, the new hope for a middle class resurgence in this country and this city. They are certainly the future employment that many District citizens look to for support of their families. You have the ability to save the Watergate Hotel jobs and by doing so to continue to weave a strong social fabric in the nation's capital. I hope that you will take that opportunity.

Hotel & Restaurant Employees LOCAL 25 AFL-CIO

We, the workers of The Watergate Hotel with our affixed signatures hereby urge and implore the District of Columbia Zoning Commission to preserve our jobs at this historic hotel property. Our jobs are good Union jobs with living wages, family sustaining benefits including full family health care and pensions. These are middle-class jobs that can not be shipped over seas but, if not protected by you, can be destroyed by this development. As the District invests millions in its new convention center and hotel development in support of it, we urge you to preserve this already operating hotel and our jobs.

Name	My job	Years of Service
Robert Adejyan	Public Area	30
[illegible]	Housekeeper	28
[illegible]	HOUSEKEEPING	28
[illegible]	Housekeeping	2
[illegible]	Room Service	30
[illegible]	HOUSEKEEP	12
[illegible]	HOUSEKEEPING	28
ALFREDO ARROYO	BANQUET HOUSEMAN	11
[illegible]	Banquet Houseman	13
[illegible]	Housekeeping	35

Hotel & Restaurant Employees LOCAL 25 HERE AFL-CIO

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Name	My job	Years of Service
Maria A-Umanzor	Pantry	21 years
Ana Ramos	Banquet	24 years
Vilma Prieto	STEWARDING	17
Alice Jenkins	Housekeeping	12 yrs
Debbie Boone	Kitchen	20 yrs
Jose Laparra	BUSBOY	19
ISRAEL-A-YANES	STEWARDING	12 Year
Khaled Abdelaziz	Bell Attendant	11 Year
Richard Popo	Doorman	30 yrs
Jorin Marcu	Housekeeping	1 Years

Hotel & Restaurant Employees LOCAL 25 HRE RAIL AFL-CIO

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Name	My job	Years of Service
TANNIS DESINORD	Server	15
JOSE A. Ventura	~~bus Boy~~	10
Jose F Ruiz	Bussey	15
DANTE VILLAGOMEZ	SERVER	11
JOEL ORTIZ	SERVER	
Francesca Cerda	Kitchen	17
ELIZABETH VASQUEZ	PANTRY SALA	22
Nora Vargas	PANTRY Cook	24
ORBELINA OSORIO	PANTRY SALA	20
Mario Ecklo	pantry cook salad	12



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Name	My job	Years of Service
Alfredo Rivera	HOUSEMAN	30
Nieves H Rivera	HOUSEKEPER	30
Alicia Hernandez	HOUSEKEPER	11
MARIA Teixeira	HOUSEKEPER	32
ZAHRA	B	
Lafayette	Server	18
Phoumy Soumphonphakdy	Houseman	20
Maria Tmagano	HouseKePeR	4-
Sanchay Chithavanh	Bell Man	25 y.
Ana Gl Fu nes	House Keeper	1 year 8 mont.

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Name	My job	Years of Service
William Silva	Loudry Dept.	15 - Years
Emmanuel Ine	Kitchen	17 yrs
Jose Pedro Santo	K Steward	21 Yes
Prayad Roytrakul	Banquet Server	23 Years
Dioulde Dieng	Room Service	9 yrs
Adiaha Samb	Housekeeping	12 yrs
Gonzalo Baez	Waiter	17 years
Orius Desinord	Waiter	18 years
Martin Peluffo	Waiter	2 1/2
Nova y Madrun	MINIBAR	3 Years



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Name	My job	Years of Service
Deloras Mitchell	Telephone Operator	25 years
Gebremichael Asgedom	Room Service	15 years
[illegible]	Purchasing	6
James	DOORMAN	33 Years
Elaine Cook	Telephone Operator	27 years
Mathew Pelath	Restaurant	21 Yrs
Cajah Se	HOUSEKEEPER	22
Jean Redeker	Housekeeping	1969
Tetlework Habte	Bartender	1989 (15 yrs)