

Testimony before the Zoning Commission
Case 07-23
October 22, 2007

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I thought it would be most helpful to put CAG's concerns in the sequence of the Office of Planning report.

page 2, item 2: We ask that the ZC include in the averaging of semesters the ESL and other students who come for the spring semester, all of whom need housing; for reasons no one can fathom, they have been excluded from the counts. Coupled with the recognition that averaging results in greater numbers of bodies on campus (as acknowledged by the Court of Appeals), the student cap is not an accurate measure.

page 2, item 4: We ask for limits on the "revenue-generating" events at Harbin Field. By this we mean turning the stadium into a performance venue; there should be no rock concerts here. It was an original condition not opposed by GU, the community, or the courts.

page 2, item 6: The Transportation Management Program should be amended to provide every encouragement for the use of Canal Road rather than the Prospect Street entrance to campus (see Gorove Slade report). The community agreed to support the Canal Road entrance more than a decade ago in exchange for relief on Prospect Street; now GU is proposing that only visitors and commercial vehicles need use Canal Road.

page 2, item 7: The BZA accepted the recitation of ALL and SNAP and other promotional efforts as proof of acceptable behavior. Yet GU adopts policies that add serious burdens to the community. It recently adopted a "one keg" policy for on-campus parties. This simply means that students will have kegger parties off-campus; GU has to be pressed to reconsider its activities. It would make no such commitment to the ANC.

Along these same lines, the university said the effort to establish the equivalent of a frat house on 35th Street as a religious order received little response from GU until it became a public scandal. Only then did the university see it had an obligation to temper the license sought by its students.

page 3, last paragraph: MedStar has announced that it will not build the MHC-1 (a physicians' office building); this pleases the community a great deal. We'd like this locked into the record. GU here proposes to transfer that "north campus" density to the "south campus," which would be unacceptable if another sizable facility will take the place of the POB on the north campus.

page 8, Variance: I have a number of comments about the rooftop structure, which was described to CAG as about 30' high; OP's report says 41+. We have had great

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trouble seeing consistent drawings. Even OGB saw drawings that were not to scale. Reading the detail on page A3 02 of the application, the tall wall of the NSB rises 232' . This should have been discussed at a quarterly meeting with full details before us; there has been no "quarterly" meeting since April; the next meeting will be this Thursday, safely after this hearing.

We have real concerns about seeing LEED certification being used to justify hugely oversized penthouses on campuses and elsewhere.

GU doesn't argue that it has no alternatives, just that they'd be more expensive. No documentation has been offered. If the variance were to be granted, I would hope there would at least be highly specific language about unique conditions that would limit the likelihood of application elsewhere (just as GU cites three other campuses in justification here).

Overall, we have supported facilities on campus that would enrich student life and provide fewer excuses to be "impactful" forces in the community. But the effort from several schools to both push the envelope and weaken the protections for the residential communities in which they exist poses a continual problem.