

February 11, 2014

Testimony of Susan Farrell in the matter of Zoning Commission Case No. 08-06A;

Title 11, Zoning Regulations – Comprehensive Text revisions; Subtitle X, Chapter 1:

Campus Plans and School Plans

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. As one who participated in the hundreds of hours in preparation for and discussion of the recent AU Campus plan, I am sure that we all share the same goal to simplify the process.

Based on the recent experience, there are several proposed changes with which I disagree and believe can and should be improved upon.

1. The rules for Further Processing in Subsection 101.8 should be changed to prohibit the combination of 2nd stage Further Processing with the 1st stage Campus Plan submittal. The experience of our yearlong process demonstrated the difficult task of trying to evaluate an overall plan concept at the same time as the specifics. On multiple occasions during the discussions regarding the massive AU East Campus proposal, Commissioners stated “well we will deal with that later during Further Processing” - only to be reminded that the submission *included* the Further Processing.

Combining the concept of a grand design with the detail of building facades and gradings under the argument that it had to be done quickly seems to set up a “deadline behavior” situation in which decisions with long lasting implications are made quickly. I propose the Further Processing should be separate from the Campus Plan Submittal and only filed after the Zoning Commission has issued its Order on the Campus Plan case.

2. Further, I oppose the Subsection 101.18 which allows the Zoning Administrator to unilaterally amend an approved campus plan. Again, there was much discussion during the AU Campus plan proceedings commenting that historically Campus plans have been simply amended along the way after the Order without any input from the community. Any amendment should be reviewed by the affected ANC so that the residents have an opportunity to be aware of and participate in the changes.
3. Finally, the proposed plan does not go far enough in Subsections 102.5 and 102.6 to address the university ownership of commercial property in residential neighborhoods. Universities should not be given the option of including the use of commercial property in the campus plan; rather since the acquisition of commercial property appears to be an integral part of universities' expansion strategies, transparency would demand that use of commercial space be overtly included in the Campus Plan.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to present these comments for consideration.

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