



Z.C. 23-08(1)

**CLOSING STATEMENT OF REV. DAVID McALLISTER-WILSON**

June 2, 2025

There are two questions being addressed in this Campus Master Plan.

For the Zoning Commission: What is the best use of this nine-acre corner in Ward 3? This land, and the adjacent American University, has been an academic hilltop since it was bare ground. This plan insures this will continue for generations. It expands the already generous green skirt around the campus, preserves all the legacy trees, provides a playground for local neighborhood children, and maintains the harmonious relationship of the campus with its neighbors. For all that has been said and written over the last three years, this plan is fundamentally about housing students on a college campus.

This plan also means this land will produce tax revenue for the first time in history. It contributes to the stock of affordable housing in the Ward which has the least amount. It preserves a spring of racial/ethnic diversity in the most mono-chrome Ward in DC. And produces future residents and non-profit leadership for students who come from the region and across the country. Including my wife and me whose children were born at Sibley while we lived in Carroll Hall.

For Wesley Theological Seminary, the question is: Can we continue to thrive in this place? We were moved to DC by a progressive, internationalist bishop, who also established the School of International Studies at American University, a sister in the Methodist denomination. Bishop Oxnam was a target of Joe McCarthy. And he thought, there needs to be a seminary in the Nation's capital, as the perfect learning environment and to be a progressive force in the country and the world. We have embodied this vision in programs in urban ministry, public theology, and global initiatives. Continuing to "Thrive in Place" is the motivation for this long and expensive process.


But, while Wesley is a graduate professional school, with the same level of education as law, medicine and architecture, our alumni, by contrast, are the proverbial church mice. Going to seminary is answering a call to serve, not a career investment. This means we cannot rely on tuition as our economic driver and cannot pay faculty university-level salaries. The whole community is answering a call. This plan is the key to financial viability because it capitalizes on the inherent value of our property, purchased originally for \$10. Educational institutions and churches, across the country are deploying the same strategy. The alternative is to sell and move.

We have gone to great lengths to respond to the concerns and suggestions of neighbors and Commissioners and have arrived at this plan. It seems to me the remaining points of opposition are repeated concerns which arise from the one-of-a-kind nature of the proposal. Which have

been addressed with careful regulatory fixes and creativity in the provision of affordable housing. (Something which Wesley supported in principle from the beginning). Is this not the reason for a zoning process, and the Zoning Commission itself, to make possible a thriving community?

Washington DC is facing perhaps the biggest challenge since the struggle to achieve Home Rule. I hope the Commission sees this as a good solution for Ward 3 and sees Wesley as a continued force for good for the City and its residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David McAllister-Wilson".

David McAllister-Wilson  
President, Wesley Theological Seminary

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on June 2, 2025, the foregoing Closing Statement of Rev. David McAllister-Wilson was delivered via electronic mail to the following:

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John Patrick Brown, Jr.