

**ORAL TESTIMONY OF DR. JEFFREY KRASKIN  
BEFORE THE DC ZONING COMMISSION**

**Re: Z.C. Case No. 24-09**

**The Wesley Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church  
Text Amendment to Subtitle C §1006.6(c) and Subtitle X §101 to allow new  
dorm on the Wesley Campus for Wesley & American students  
November 18, 2024**

Good evening Chairman Hood and Commissioners. My name is Dr. Jeffrey Kraskin. I am a fourth generation Washingtonian and lived in Spring Valley for over 62 years. I submitted my written testimony into the record of this case. Today, since my time is short I will elaborate on some of that I have submitted.

Throughout my adult life I served the District of Columbia in both elected and appointed positions. Additionally, I served in numerous capacities in the Spring Valley and Wesley Heights communities and in Ward 3.

When I was an ANC commissioner and officer of SVWHCA I saw numerous issues associated with the Seminary. These included the ringing of the bell tower to the creation of the now referred New Dorm. I recall the construction of the bell tower and the 1961 placement of the John Wesley riding the horse statue. There was a time as a young child that I was concerned he might ride into my bedroom since he was aimed at my window.

While I thrived as a child and an adult only 140 feet away from the Seminary, I always considered the Seminary as a friend to the community.

Today, the issue before you is the consideration of Text Amendments as a means to circumvent existing Zoning regulations associated not only with Campus Plans but Inclusionary Zoning regulations, and impacting various other areas of land use regulations and definitions.

During the other Seminary cases there have been moments when the Seminary has been addressed as if it were a church. The Seminary is NOT a church. It is an educational institution no different than any other educational institution in DC. The Wesley Seminary is a graduate school program, not an undergraduate school. Yes, it has a chapel but that is the working laboratory for the school. Most hospitals have chapels but that does not make them a church. The word Seminary means simply a school for the training of priests, ministers, or rabbis. Further there is the misinterpretation of the word Thrive. To thrive is to grow, develop, and flourish. Yes, Thrive is a wonderful marketing term.

I can certainly give credit to Seminary President David McAllister-Wilson who has numerous times stated that the Seminary is financially

stable. While some may applaud the Seminary leadership for attempting to monetize the Seminary property, the method chosen is and continues to be not within the existing Zoning Regulations as related to residential property utilized for educational purposes.

Again, I would like to commend ANC-3D for suggesting that the Seminary purchase a building in a DC Commercial zone and retrofit creating a multiuse building for both educational and residential purposes.

Today's Washington Post Metro front page story regarding AU and its 60 million dollar deficit plays a critical part of this discussion. In reality, the Landmark deal without any Text Amendments or modification of regulations would be great for AU on AU's land to build the already approved residences for 500 students. Landmark would be building on AU, for AU students, and would occupy no more build-out than approved.

I urge the Commission to put an end to this ongoing search to circumvent regulations. Reject these text amendments. Direct the Seminary to return with a viable Campus Plan in accordance with all current regulations. Thank you for your attention.