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6/8/26 Testimony of Barbara Kahlow
on Zoning Commission Case No. 87-23A
GWU – PUD Modification with Hearing @ Square 78, 2001 Penn. Ave. NW

I, Barbara Kahlow, live at 800 25th Street, N.W. I am testifying on behalf of the West End Citizens Association (WECA), the oldest citizens organization in the Foggy Bottom-West End area and the second oldest in DC. One of the WECA’s principal goals is maintaining the quality of life for the residential community in Foggy Bottom-West End.

The WECA was not a “Party” in the 1987 ZC Case No. 87-23. Since then, the WECA has become more active in land use cases in Foggy Bottom-West End and has been recognized by the Zoning Commission as a “Party” in many cases, especially PUDs. On March 6, 2026, the WECA wrote the Commission about this case (Exhibit 15). On April 22, 2026, the WECA requested “Party” status in this PUD case in Opposition (Exhibit 22/22A). This WECA letter mentioned opposition to:

“(a) a reduction in required ground floor retail space, which was a critical community amenity in this PUD; (b) substituting GW university uses (e.g., like the 2100 Penn. Ave. PUD’s 2-story vanity GWU campus store) for some of the intended community-oriented, non-GWU retail space; and (c) substituting some GWU ‘student-facing uses.’”

This afternoon, I will discuss the following subjects: (1) George Washington University’s (GW’s) 2100 Penn. Ave. PUD’s requirements fulfillment and non-fulfillment to date; (2) history of the WECA’s agreement to GW’s request to the WECA to close retail in the District House dormitory to public use; and (3) the instant 2001 Penn. Ave. Modification With Hearing request.

2100 Penn. Ave. PUD (ZC No. 06-11Y/-6-12Y, Square 75)

The record in this case is extremely disappointing to the WECA. In sum, GW -- without any prior notice to or discussion with the WECA or the rest of the Foggy Bottom-West End community -- substituted its retail **GWU Campus Store** which was located elsewhere in GW’s Campus Plan boundaries into the 2-story retail which our community had expected would continue to be community-oriented retail establishments, including a grocery store and traditional small retailers (e.g., barber shop, shoe repair, dry cleaner, as had existed for

many years before this PUD). In response, the WECA had to hire a zoning attorney to help in this case (see Exhibits 10, 11, 15, & 16).

In addition, the Zoning Commission Order's requirement for a **day care** establishment has still not been provided since the space allocated was too small for day care vendors. In addition, we were stunned to find that one of the two food establishments which are the only ground floor retail to date has a huge back-room **nightclub** currently run by "Casta's" on New Hampshire Ave. which has been a problem ABC establishment in the West End for many years. The bottom line is that we were misled and now realize that we need more precise Zoning Commission requirements in all future Zoning Order's Decision sections for GWU cases in Foggy Bottom. During today's cross examination, I will be asking the Applicant about such requirements for the Commission's Order in today's case in order to avoid costly future disputes.

District House Dorm PUD (ZC No. 06-11W/06-12W, Square 77)

The WECA was granted Party status in this case (Exhibit 17) and testified on April 25, 2022 at GW's request (by GW's then Executive Vice President to me) in support of closing the retail in the District House dorm to the public since there was already an abundance of food establishments nearby – in the 2000 Penn Ave. food court and along the I Street corridor (Exhibit 20). Exhibit 17 includes the following quid pro quo explanation:

"The WECA witness will testify in support of the Modification of Significance to remove the previously-required 5,000 s.f. of public retail space (which included several food vendors on the first floor and in the basement) in the District House dormitory, 2121 H Street NW, to reflect: (i) an increase in nearby public food venues (e.g., in the new Western Market at 2000 Penn. Ave., and in the new PUD at 2100 Penn. Ave. which will be opening soon), and (ii) the GWU policy change to "facilitate the University's plan to provide conventional on-campus dining opportunities restricted to university use. The purpose behind the University's initiative is to **enhance student safety** and to address food insecurity on campus" (12/1/21, GWU Application cover letter, p. 1, emphasis added).

At the request of the WECA, GWU made an increased contribution of \$20,000 to the Foggy Bottom Association (FBA) with the specific purpose to install a green wall at 26th and I Streets, NW to mitigate an adverse noise effect unintentionally created [*in implementing*] ... an amenity in the GWU PUD ZC No. 06-11V/06-12V (Square 75), 2100 Penn. Ave. PUD. The Order approving the Modification of Consequence for this PUD provided, "the Applicant ... amended the Application to increase the amount of

the proffered contribution to the FBA from \$80,000 to \$100,000 and to further expand the replacement benefit uses to include a green wall ... The Applicant credits WECA for the idea to broaden the range of uses of the replacement benefit as well as increase the amount of the contribution to cover the broader range of uses” (para. 7, p. 2).”

As discussed below, the WECA would like to suggest some alternative amenity options as a quid pro quo for GW’s request to remove one side (the larger side with 4085 square feet) of the 2001 Penn. required retail space.

2001 Penn. Ave. PUD (ZC No. 87-23A, Square 78)

The larger Eastern ground floor 4085 square feet in the 2001 Penn. Ave. PUD, which is 60 percent of the PUD-required retail space, had a ground-floor bank for many years. It served the Foggy Bottom-West End residential community. GW’s Modification Application proposes to convert this space to “an active student-facing use.”

In a recent May 20, 2026 Foggy Bottom-West End ANC-2A meeting, in answer to a WECA question, GW clarified what “student-facing” means by providing two examples: (1) a student employment center or (2) a student admissions office. Both of these uses would be exclusively for GW students and of no real benefit to the Foggy Bottom-West End residential community, which is one of the WECA’s objections to GW’s request.

As discussed below, the WECA would like to suggest some alternative amenity options as a quid pro quo for GW’s request to remove the Eastern ground floor retail space from the currently required 2001 Penn. Ave. retail space. It should be noted that since the 2022 closure of the District House retail to the public, the public food venues in the immediate area have only increased. This belies the need for public access to additional food vendors in the District House as proposed by GW.

As discussed above, GW’s May 8, 2026 Supplemental Submission called for replacing the Eastern retail in the 2001 Penn. Ave. PUD with access during week-day day-time hours only to retail in the GW District House student dorm which used to be fully open to the public. As I just explained, the #2 official in GW previously asked the WECA to support its request for discontinuing public access for multiple reasons including to **enhance student safety**.

On May 6, 2026, I emailed the Applicant’s attorney and asked, “what changes in dorm security will GW need to make for the public’s entry into the District House retail since the public doesn’t have card keys to enter a GW dorm?” Later that day, he replied, “GW will

figure out how to balance access to the retail with security for the rooms above.” This answer was not reassuring.

Instead of reopening the District House retail to the public during week-day day-time hours, the WECA suggests alternative PUD amenity ideas which could not be ended by GW at a future time, and which are clearly needed in the Foggy Bottom-West End residential community. Here are two ideas which we would like the Zoning Commission to ask GW to explore:

- (a) provide free technical assistance by GW undergraduate or graduate students to all Foggy Bottom-West End residents who need help to use their in-home computers, smart phones, i-Pads, Kindles, etc.; and/or
- (b) provide a \$25,000 monetary contribution for the “Resident Relief Fund” at St. Mary’s Court, 724 24th Street NW (<https://stmaryscourt.org/>). This Foggy Bottom facility operates as a 140-unit apartment building under Section 202 of the National Housing Act where low-income housing is provided to the elderly and persons with accessibility needs.

The Resident Relief Fund maintains a Care Pantry in the building for household products, incontinence products, etc. It was also the vehicle which the public used to make financial contributions to meet the residents’ needs after the November 15, 2022 massive fire which adversely affected a significant number of them.

One last note, the Foggy Bottom-West End ANC-2A Commissioner whose Single Member District includes 2001 Penn. Ave. stated in the ANC’s recent May 20, 2026 meeting, that the “net reduction in public retail is unfortunate” and any future request for a reduction in PUD-required retail “needs a high level of scrutiny and needs a balance with equal benefits.” The WECA agrees.