

6/21/21

To the DC Zoning Commission

**Testimony of Mary Beth Tinker**

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**Re: Virtual public hearing on Case No. 20-33 The University of the District of Columbia-Campus Plan Approval for the Period of 2020-2030 (“2020 Campus Plan”)**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mary Beth Tinker, and I am a resident of ANC 3F-02, near UDC’s Van Ness campus. I am speaking today as an individual, and I am excited about the improvements being proposed to the UDC’s Van Ness Campus.

Almost ten years ago, a number of empty garden beds on the campus were prepared and then planted with perennials and vegetable crops as part of a project associated with UDC’s College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Science (CAUSES).

Along with other community volunteers and UDC students, I took part in that effort, and have been involved ever since. Our group is the UDC Garden Club, and we partner with the UDC Environmental Sustainability and Leadership Club, the UDC Master Gardener program and the UDC Student Food Pantry.

Our organic gardens are called the “Garden of the Senses, and they are scattered across the Van Ness campus. Many of the gardens are quite substantial, and have been used as sites for the DC Summer Youth Employment Project, as service learning sites for DC high school students, pre-school programs, practicum sites for CAUSES students and international students, for community events, and much more.

Like all UDC efforts, the promotion of equity is at the heart of our work and we are committed not only to increasing food justice in DC, but to creating public space that is useful and nurturing to the public, and public health.

I support the current proposed Campus Plan for student housing, increasing the student population, adding green roofs and promoting the sustainability and equity goals of UDC.

But our group would like to ensure that the current gardens are not disrupted, and that the project include additional space for the current garden project so that we can produce more food on campus and expand our capacity for student and community agriculture projects.

Our project furthers UDC’s central goals of equity, urban agriculture and sustainability. As community members and students, we would like to be included in ongoing plans for the campus, and we appreciate this opportunity and future opportunities to be part of the planning.

Thank you,  
Mary Beth Tinker

