

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ZONING COMMISSION

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

VIA WEBEX

MEETING SESSION

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2023

The Public Meeting by the District of Columbia Zoning Commission convened via videoconference pursuant to notice at 4:00 p.m. EDT, Anthony Hood, Chairperson, presiding.

ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

ANTHONY J. HOOD, Chairperson
ROBERT MILLER, Vice Chairperson
TAMMY STIDHAM, Commissioner
JOSEPH S. IMAMURA, Commissioner

OFFICE OF ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

SHARON SCHELLIN, Secretary
PAUL YOUNG, Data Specialist

OFFICE OF ZONING LEGAL DIVISION STAFF PRESENT:

HILLARY LOVICK, Esquire

This transcript serves as the minutes from the Public Meeting held on November 6, 2023.

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C O N T E N T S

Case No. 20-29A

Trustees for Harvard University - Amendment
To the 2020-2040 Campus Plan for the Dumbarton
Oaks Research Library and Collection

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(4:00 p.m.)

CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Good afternoon, ladies and gentleman. Today's date is November the 6th, 2023. We're convening and broadcasting this public hearing by video conferencing.

My name is Anthony Hood and I'm joined by Vice Chair Miller, Commissioner Stidham, and Commissioner Imamura, as well as the Office of Zoning staff Ms. Sharon Schellin and Mr. Paul Young, who will be handling all of our virtual operations, as well as our Office of Zoning Legal Division, Ms. Hillary Lovick.

I will ask others to introduce themselves at the appropriate time.

The virtual public hearing notice is available on the Office of Zoning's website. This proceeding is being recorded by a court reporter. The platforms used are Webex and YouTube Live.

The video will be available on the Office of Zoning's website after the hearing. All persons planning to testify should have signed up in advance and will be called by name at the appropriate time.

At the time of signup, all participants will complete the oath or affirmation required by Subtitle Z48.7.

Accordingly, all those listening by Webex or by

1 phone will be muted during the hearing and only those who
2 have signed up to participate or testify will be unmuted at
3 the appropriate time.

4 When called, please state your name before
5 providing your testimony. When you are finished speaking,
6 please mute your audio. If you experience difficulty
7 accessing Webex or if you're a telephone call-in or have not
8 signed up, then please call our OZ hotline number at (202)
9 727-0789.

10 If you wish to file -- excuse me, if you wish to
11 file a written testimony or additional supporting documents
12 during the hearing then please be prepared to describe and
13 discuss it at the time of your testimony.

14 The subject of this evening's Zoning Commission
15 case number 20-29A, Trustees for Harvard University Campus
16 Plan Amendment and further processing to construct a Farrand
17 House at Square 2155, Lot 812, 1732 32nd Street Northwest.
18 Again, today's date is November the 6th, 2023.

19 The hearing will be conducted in accordance with
20 provisions of 11 DCMR Chapter 4 as follows; preliminary
21 matters, applicant's case. The applicant has up to 60
22 minutes -- I'm not sure how much time they asked, Michelle
23 will tell us once I finish, and then we will have a report
24 of other government agencies, report of the Department of
25 Transportation, and then the Office of Planning, Report of

1 the ANC, testimony of organizations and individuals,
2 organizations five minutes, individuals three minutes. Then
3 we'll have rebuttal and closing by the applicant.

4 Again, the OZ Hotline number is (202) 727-0789 and
5 again, the ANC for this evening is ANC 2E.

6 With that, Ms. Schellin, do we have any
7 preliminary matters?

8 MS. SCHELLIN: There are no party's status
9 request, no proffered experts, and the applicant, Leila
10 Batties and John Oliver, representing the applicant, rather,
11 from Holland & Knight will be standing on the record. And
12 Karen Thomas will be representing the Office of Planning.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: All right. I like that,
14 they're going to stand on the record? Okay.

15 MS. SCHELLIN: Yes. And I believe the Office of
16 Planning will also be standing on the record and as of this
17 moment, we have no one registered to testify.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: So we have no objections,
19 everybody is standing on the record. I could try to break
20 the record and just close out, but I won't do that. I will
21 see -- let's bring them up and see if my colleagues have any
22 questions or comments.

23 I have done that in five minutes, but I won't do
24 that tonight. Let's see -- I was not aware of standing on
25 the record, which I think is good.

1 Let's see if there's any questions. Let me start
2 with you, Commissioner Imamura.

3 Well, first of all, let me let Ms. Batties
4 introduce herself.

5 MS. BATTIES: Good evening. Can you guys hear me
6 okay?

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

8 MS. BATTIES: Okay. Great. Leila Batties and
9 John Oliver with Holland & Knight representing the Trustees
10 for Harvard University in connection with the request to
11 amend the campus plan for Dumbarton Oaks and also further
12 processing under the amended campus plan.

13 Also here this evening, on behalf -- representing
14 Dumbarton Oaks is Ms. Yota Batsaki, Mr. Mark Keene, and
15 Wells Megalli with Selldorf Architects. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Batties,
17 and also to the team, let's see if we have any questions.

18 Let me go to Commissioner Imamura first.

19 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Mr. Chairman, I'll be
20 brief. Just a couple of questions, Ms. Batties. I wanted
21 to double check whether the applicant agrees with the
22 conditions requested by OP, as stated in the report?

23 MS. BATTIES: Yes. The applicant has no issues
24 with the conditions proposed by the Office of Planning.

25 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Okay. And then, I noticed

1 the Old Georgetown Board essentially voted in support with a
2 couple of conditions, just about the use of wood windows and
3 zinc-colored materials on the egress stair to match the
4 roof.

5 I presume the architect is in agreement? The
6 applicant is also in agreement with those decisions?

7 MS. BATTIES: Yeah. I'm going to let Ms. Megalli
8 of Seldorf Architects respond to those -- for that question.
9 Wells, are you on?

10 MS. MEGALLI: I am, hi. Wells Megalli from
11 Seldorf Architects. So yes, we previously received concept
12 approval from the OGB with the comments that you stated.
13 We're now, and since that was back in April, and since that
14 time we have developed the design and we are now seeking
15 permit approval, so we are still in that process with the
16 OGB, but absolutely, you know, we'll defer to all of their
17 comments as we go through that process, but we're still in
18 the midst of it now.

19 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Terrific. Thank you, Ms.
20 Megalli.

21 And then, one additional question. I'm just
22 curious, this is for my own curiosity and interest, what
23 happened to the need for the new greenhouse?

24 MS. MEGALLI: That's a great question. So
25 initially we were -- the client was conceiving of a new

1 greenhouse in this location and then the existing historic
2 greenhouse then became mead and white (phonetic), 1920s
3 greenhouse was going to be reconceived as an adapted-for-use
4 project in an academic program being developed in that
5 building with an addition to that historic greenhouse.

6 After actually feedback from the OGB as well as a
7 lot of studies that we did, it was determined, weighing the
8 pros and cons, that the historic greenhouse was better used
9 as a greenhouse and that it should be restored, and that
10 project is happening.

11 And so the original greenhouse is being renovated
12 and restored and will maintain its current function as a
13 greenhouse and that this site, that had been identified, was
14 much better suited to a new building for the academic
15 program that the owner would like to broaden on campus.

16 So that was some of the reasoning. So it's still
17 happening. There will still be the -- so the old greenhouse
18 will stay a greenhouse and then the academic program is
19 moved to this new site where there's a little bit more
20 freedom of what we can do there to support that program.

21 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: All right. Terrific.
22 Thank you, Ms. Megalli, for your response. Well-articulated
23 and I'm glad to have that on the record, just to tell a more
24 complete story.

25 Also, OGB, CFA have already commented on the

1 design. I think it's pretty reasonable. Certainly not what
2 we're here to evaluate tonight, but just wanted to put that
3 out there for that.

4 Mr. Chairman, I don't have any other questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

6 Commissioner Stidham?

7 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: So thank you. I had the
8 same question about the greenhouse (audio malfunction)
9 keeping the historic property and using --

10 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Ms. Stidham, I'm not sure
11 others can hear you. Maybe I'm just having a problem? Oh,
12 okay. I understand.

13 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: I can't hear --

14 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Oh, okay, I understand. Okay.
15 Can you -- maybe closer or turn it up?

16 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Is that any better?

17 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: That's a lot better. Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay. Sorry about that. I
19 appreciate the information on the greenhouse. I had the
20 same question.

21 How about the moving just the -- because I'm
22 curious, the moving of the cooling tower?

23 MS. MEGALLI: Yes. What's the question, Ms.
24 Stidham?

25 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Moving the -- what was the

1 reasoning behind moving the cooling tower from the original
2 planned location?

3 MS. MEGALLI: Sure. So the three cooling towers
4 that are currently onsite are at the end of their useful
5 life and needed to be replaced with new equipment.

6 And so in looking at the site planning and the
7 best location and orientation for the new building, the
8 Farrand House, it was determined that we should shift the
9 cooling towers over to make room for the siting of the house
10 next to the dell, which is a very beautiful kind of
11 landscape feature at Dumbarton Oaks and the cooling towers
12 previously occupied that space.

13 So they are being replaced with new equipment,
14 being shifted over slightly towards more of the perimeter of
15 the campus to make room for the new building.

16 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Okay. Great. Thank you.
17 I had nothing else.

18 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

19 Vice Chair Miller?

20 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman
21 and thank you Ms. Batties and Ms. Megalli for being here
22 today to present this campus plan amendment for Dunbarton
23 Oaks.

24 I think it's very straightforward. I appreciate
25 the questions and comments of Commissioners Imamura and

1 Stidham and I think it's a very beautiful design that fits
2 into the landscape. It probably was designed by a
3 committee, if you went through OGB and all that, but you
4 deserve credit, Ms. Megalli, primarily, I assume.

5 So I thank you. I have no questions, Mr.
6 Chairman. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you. Due to the record,
8 I have no questions and when I read ANC letters I read them
9 very closely; I read everything, but I really look at the
10 ANC's when the ANC says, ANC 2E fully supports -- most of
11 the time it says ANC 2E supports, but this says fully
12 supports, so with that I know that this is has pretty much
13 been vetted through the community, so I want to thank all of
14 you all and all the work you all have done.

15 I don't have any questions. I think my colleagues
16 have covered it.

17 All right. Any follow-ups?

18 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Just one follow-up, Mr.
19 Chairman. On the ANC letter I also appreciate that letter
20 and actually that ANC is one that also says we take no
21 position, even if they're supportive.

22 So I agree with you that's a full-throated
23 endorsement and I appreciate the community engagement by the
24 applicant on the project.

25 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I didn't realize that ANC does

1 that, but for them to do this, Vice Chair, that echoed --
2 that really expedites my point. I mean, that really puts
3 more emphasis on my point that I made, so thank you. I did
4 not know that. I have to keep an eye on that. I have not
5 seen that before.

6 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: It may have been the BVA
7 case that I --

8 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

9 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: -- that I sat in on
10 where I they were specifically asked, well, what does that
11 mean, taking no position? So anyway. It might have been
12 B --

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay.

14 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: -- it might be before
15 the -- it might have been before the BVA.

16 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Well, great.

17 All right. Thank you. Let's go -- Ms. Schellin,
18 do we have anyone from the ANC that has any cross
19 examination? They fully support, they probably didn't show
20 up?

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Correct. There's no one here.
22 They did not sign up to testify and just to --

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Well, I appreciate --

24 MS. SCHELLIN: -- doublecheck, I do not see them.

25 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Well, we appreciate ANC

1 2F, I mean, 2 -- hold on, let me look at the letter first
2 before I -- 2E and I will do that when the ANC reports.

3 Do we have any other government agencies before I
4 go to DDOT and OP?

5 MS. SCHELLIN: We do not.

6 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Let's go to DDOT. Do we
7 have anyone here from DDOT?

8 MS. SCHELLIN: No.

9 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. DDOT is Exhibit 16 and
10 they have their report. They basically -- let me get to the
11 end of it. DDOT has no objections to the approval of this
12 application and they have some other things in there, about
13 how they did their review and that's our Exhibit 16.

14 All right. Let's go to the Office of Planning. I
15 know they're standing on the record, but Planning can come
16 and introduce themselves.

17 MS. THOMAS: Yes. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and
18 members of the Commission, Karen Thomas with the Office of
19 Planning.

20 We are in support with the request for the
21 processing in this application and we support OGB's and the
22 DDOT's recommendations. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you, Ms. Thomas. Again,
24 I thank OP for all the work that they have done, as well as
25 DDOT. Let's see if we have any questions for the Office of

1 Planning.

2 Commissioner Imamura?

3 Commissioner Stidham?

4 And Vice Chair Miller?

5 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: No questions. Thank you
6 to the Office of Planning for your work on this case.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I don't have any questions.

8 Ms. Batties, you have any questions of the Office
9 of Planning?

10 MS. BATTIES: No, sir.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

12 All right. Thank you again, Ms. Thomas.

13 Let's see where I'm at.

14 Okay, let's go to ANC report and again, as Ms.

15 Schellin stated, I don't think we have anyone here from the
16 ANC, but as I've stated, that is our Exhibit 12, and it
17 basically says -- and I appreciate the ANC and all the work
18 that they do.

19 ANC 2E fully supports, you notice I keep going
20 back to that, the trustees for Harvard University's
21 application to amend this existing campus plan in order to
22 allow for the construction of Farrand House and the
23 relocation and reconfiguration of cooling towers, mechanical
24 equipment, and service court and this is signed by Chair
25 Gwendolyn Lohse.

1 Does anyone know the correct pronunciation of her
2 last name? Because I don't want to mess it up for the
3 record.

4 Does anybody know it? That's all right. So we'll
5 leave it like that. Let me be the one to mess it up.

6 And if she ever watches this, I apologize for
7 messing it up and I'm sure you'll correct me at a later
8 time.

9 All right. Ms. Schellin, do we have anyone here
10 to testify in support, opposition, or undeclared?

11 MS. SCHELLIN: No, no category at all. No
12 witnesses.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Schellin.
14 Ms. Batties, you have any closing?

15 MS. BATTIES: No, I just want to thank the
16 Commission. I also want to acknowledge, Commission, the ANC
17 2E and specifically Commissioner Chow, who is our single-
18 member district representative, who is very responsive, in
19 terms of our meeting request and helpful through the
20 process. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. Thank you all. I thank
22 everyone for all the work they did in making this a much
23 easier case for us tonight. We can use one every now and
24 then and we appreciate it.

25 Let's see. I think this is pretty

1 straightforward, who would like to make a motion on this?

2 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: I'll make the motion, Mr.
3 Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: I move that the Zoning
6 Commission approve case number 20-29A Trustees for Harvard
7 University Campus Plan amendment and further process to
8 construct the Farrand House at Square 2155, Lot 812 at 1732
9 32nd Street Northwest, and I ask for a second.

10 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Second.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Thank you. It's been moved and
12 properly seconded. Any further discussion?

13 Not hearing any, Ms. Schellin, would you do roll
14 call vote please?

15 You're on mute, Ms. Schellin.

16 MS. SCHELLIN: Oh, sorry.

17 Commissioner Imamura?

18 COMMISSIONER IMAMURA: Yes.

19 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Stidham?

20 COMMISSIONER STIDHAM: Yes.

21 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Hood?

22 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

23 MS. SCHELLIN: Commissioner Miller?

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes.

25 MS. SCHELLIN: The vote is 4 to zero to one, to

1 approve final action in Zoning Commission case number 20-
2 29A. If we could have the applicant provide us with a draft
3 order in two weeks and I'm assuming the Commission would
4 approve a summary order in this case?

5 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Yes.

6 MS. SCHELLIN: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: I think this is -- calls for a
8 summary order.

9 Anything else, Ms. Schellin?

10 MS. SCHELLIN: No, sir.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOOD: Okay. So before I close out,
12 the Zoning Commission has its regular month -- one of our
13 monthly meetings are -- I think this may be the only one for
14 this month, I'm not sure, don't quote me on that, but
15 anyway, we're having our -- one of our meetings November the
16 9th at 4 p.m. on this same platform. We have various agenda
17 items. If you wish to follow us on the same platform, it's
18 at 4 p.m. this coming Thursday.

19 So with that I want to thank everyone for their
20 participation tonight and all the hard work they did in this
21 case. We greatly appreciate it.

22 With that, this hearing is adjourned. Good night,
23 everyone.

24 (Whereupon the above-entitled meeting was
25 adjourned at 4:18 p.m.)

REPORTER CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Public Meeting

Before: DCZC

Date: 11-02-2023

Place: Teleconference

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direction; further, that said transcript is a true and
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