



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

September 29, 2017

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chairman
Zoning Commission
441 4th Street NW, Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001
zcsubmissions@dc.gov

RE: ZC Applications by the George Washington University and Boston Properties for a Campus Plan Amendment, Map Amendment, and Second Stage PUD at 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW (ZC #06-11O and ZC #06-12O)

Dear Chairman Hood,

At its regular meeting on September 19, 2017, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With six of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (6-0-0*), after a motion made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Zhurbinskiy, to adopt the following resolution:

ANC 2A is generally supportive of the project as presented. In particular, the Commission expresses its appreciation for what it considers to be a significant improvement in urban design with the new edifice in relation to the structure that presently occupies the site. Furthermore, ANC 2A credits the retail design and the tenants likely to be attracted for the spaces envisioned as being a significant potential benefit for the community.

Finally, the Commission supports the public benefits identified by the developer, finding that their summed value is commensurate with the zoning relief sought and that the specific benefits identified would represent a meaningful package of improvements to a variety of community organizations. The Commission particularly appreciates the emphasis on improvements to parkland and public spaces both in the immediate vicinity of the project, and throughout the wider neighborhood.

The Commission makes its support for the project contingent, however, on the George Washington University identifying and fully accounting for where administrative uses displaced from the current Rice Hall building will be accommodated. The ANC is concerned that dispersal of these functions might reduce the amount of space otherwise devoted to academic or student-serving purposes, and believes that the primary function of development flexibility granted to the University under its current Campus Plan should be to accommodate its direct academic mission. The Commission seeks assurances



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from the University on this basis that the dislocation of tenants from Rice Hall will not adversely impact academic and student life uses.

Furthermore, since the object of the 20-year Campus Plan was to create a transparent, reliable plan for the University’s development over the term of the Plan, the ANC is concerned that the re-designation of the Rice Hall parcel from “Academic/Administrative” use to “Commercial/Investment” not be precedent-setting as far as encouraging additional re-designations beyond what was envisioned in the Plan. This is especially of concern as it relates to the re-designation of parcels to investment use from other functions more directly related to the University’s core mission.

Lastly, although the Commission does not make its support contingent on this factor – it strongly requests that the University and Boston Properties work to facilitate the relocation of the small, neighborhood-serving business tenants in the present 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW building to similarly-sized and similarly-priced retail spaces in the vicinity. The Commission encourages the University to creatively utilize its real estate portfolio to accomplish this end.

The Commission expresses its disappointment that the affordable, small business tenants displaced to make way for the 2112 Pennsylvania Avenue NW project on the adjacent parcel were either not able to reopen elsewhere in the community or were generally forced to move farther from the core campus area. The ANC is concerned that this trend, in place for several decades and contributed to by numerous office/institutional developers on the Pennsylvania Avenue NW corridor, has resulted in a street bereft of any activity outside of weekday business hours. While the Commission credits Boston Properties’ design and track record as being likely to improve the retail environment on this particular block, it still seeks a tenant mix that respects the neighborhood’s unique retail needs and that maintains some of the services that have long been provided by the tenants presently located on the parcel.

Commissioners William Kennedy Smith (2A04@anc.dc.gov), Detrick Campbell (2A07@anc.dc.gov), and Patrick Kennedy (2A01@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy
Chairperson



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CC: David Avitabile, Counsel for the Applicants
Jake Stroman, Vice President of Development, Boston Properties
Alicia Knight, Senior Associate Vice President for Operations, GW
Renee McPhatter, Office of Government and Community Relations, GW

* Commissioner Florence Harmon recused herself from voting on this matter.