



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

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

January 30, 2014

Mr. Anthony Hood
Chairperson
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001
zcsubmissions@dc.gov

RE: Zoning Commission Case No. 08-06A (Title 11, Zoning Regulations – Comprehensive Text Revisions, Subtitle X)

Testimony of Patrick Kennedy, Chairperson of ANC 2A

Good evening Chairman Hood and members of the Zoning Commission. My name is Patrick Kennedy, and I am the chairperson of ANC 2A – representing the Foggy Bottom and West End neighborhoods of Ward 2. I want to begin by thanking the Commission for its responsiveness to the concerns of ANCs and community members across the city, and for responding to those concerns by taking exceptional steps to ensure that the Commission hears from as many residents as possible on this most important subject matter. In particular, I'd like to express my appreciation for the unique opportunity being afforded to ANCs this evening.

With that in mind, I will be testifying on behalf of our ANC regarding Subtitle X of the Comprehensive Text Revisions of the Zoning Re-Write, in accordance with a resolution passed by ANC 2A at our January 15th meeting. That resolution is part of the record for case 08-06A, as **Exhibit No. 477**.

I do want to note that the resolution that I have referred to, as well as this testimony, supplement previous comments that ANC 2A had entered into the record at the time of the initial round of hearings on the Zoning Re-Write last year.

As you all are no doubt familiar, the campus planning process is an incredibly important one for communities in the District of Columbia that neighbor our many institutions of higher education. We are all familiar with the tensions that traditionally accompany the town-gown paradigm, but the campus planning process should – in theory – alleviate some of these tensions by providing an opportunity for universities to plan their futures inclusively, alongside their neighbors.

As we have seen in recent years with the latest Georgetown campus plan, a cooperative relationship between universities and their neighbors is possible. To get to this point, however, all issues of contention between universities and communities need to be put on the table and addressed. The campus plan process provides an optimal setting to do this, but presently an important piece of campus planning is not required to be a part of the process: commercially-zoned property owned and acquired by universities.

In this matter, ANC 2A joins with our colleagues on ANC 3D (**Exhibit No. 91**) and with Councilmember Mary Cheh (**letter dated 8/19/12**) to encourage the Zoning Commission to adopt regulations mandating that ownership and planned acquisition of commercial properties be considered as a component of university campus plans.

This is a particularly important matter for residents of Foggy Bottom and the West End. The presence of George Washington University, while offering many benefits to residents of our communities, comes with



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

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

significant potential adverse impacts that must be ameliorated in order to preserve residential quality of life and the viability of a permanent residential community in our neighborhoods.

As GWU is the largest private landowner in the District of Columbia, it is omnipresent in our community. Of GWU’s many land holdings in Foggy Bottom, a substantial number are commercial properties outside of the campus boundaries. University use of these properties, whether for educational or external revenue-generating uses, constitutes a significant part of its role in the community and should be considered as such in the campus planning process.

The Office of Planning is to be commended for many of the changes that it has proposed to Subtitle X, in the service of the following goals that it has identified regarding campus plans:

- To promote well-planned and designed educational campuses;
- To encourage long-term facilities planning for these uses;
- To minimize negative impacts of campuses on surrounding residential areas; and
- To provide consistency and transparency to the campus planning process.

ANC 2A believes that expanding the scope of campus plans to include commercial property use dovetails with all four of these objectives. Indeed, OP has included in its draft regulations language in Chapters 102.5 and 102.6 which allows for the applicant to request that use of its commercial property under the new regulations be subject to campus plan regulations and that the Zoning Commission may determine that it is appropriate for the property to be considered as such, respectively.

We believe that consideration of these matters under campus plans should not be optional, and that arbitrary determinations of what university-owned commercial property is best reviewed under campus plans should be avoided – by making the campus plan review process mandatory.

It is also the opinion of our ANC that supplemental textual changes are needed to address matters that are not covered under the draft language. Specifically, members of our community are concerned at the lack of standardization in the campus plan process that resulted in GWU’s latest campus plan being processed as an omnibus PUD for a 20-year time frame.

This was unprecedented in the history of campus planning in the District of Columbia, particularly given that GWU was less than halfway through its prior campus plan – implemented largely in the community’s favor despite being litigated by the University – before seeking to re-open the process.

The 20 year length of GWU’s current plan offers little substantial opportunity for the community to impact the nature of campus development through second-stage further processing, and the nature of the omnibus PUD resulted in the delivery of what many feel are substandard community amenities with little relation to the actual preference of community members. We feel that it is necessary for OP to address these matters in order to ensure that the campus plan process will be an equitable one for both universities and their surrounding neighborhoods in the future.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Office of Planning, the Office of Zoning, and the Zoning Commission for their engagement and diligence on this most important civic matter. I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify before you this evening, and I am happy to answer any questions that you might have for me.