

10/8/20 Testimony of Barbara Kahlow  
on Zoning Commission Case No. 20-17

OP's Text Amendment to Subtitle Z to Suspend Certain Types of Conditions of Approved Campus Plans During 2020-2021 Academic Year Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

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. One of the WECA's goals is maintaining the quality of life for the residential community in Foggy Bottom-West End.

On August 12, 2020, the WECA filed comments on the Commission's August 7<sup>th</sup> Emergency and Proposed Rulemaking in ZC Case No. 20-17, Suspension of Certain Types of Conditions of Approved Campus Plans During 2020-2021 Academic Year Due to COVID-19 Pandemic. Today, I want to add another substantive comment based on: (a) information which the WECA learned on September 14<sup>th</sup> in the George Washington University's (GWU) quarterly Community Advisory Committee meeting, (b) other filed community comments on the August 7<sup>th</sup> rulemaking, and (c) a not-fully-responsive change made by GWU on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

On September 14, 2020, in answer to a WECA question about GWU's testing of students for COVID-19, we learned that GWU planned weekly testing only of students in the three dormitories (housing approximately 500 students) which are open in Fall 2020, i.e., GWU would be doing **no** testing of the many students living in off-campus housing in the Foggy Bottom-West End community. We were horrified and worried for the safety of residents, especially elderly residents and residents of high-rise apartment buildings who share elevators and other common areas. On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, GWU responded to our oral concerns by making a change to include limited testing of only some off-campus students. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, GWU wrote me regarding off-campus students, "Students can now obtain tests through GW's in-house testing operation if they believe they have been exposed to the virus or have symptoms." GWU further responded that these students would need to be quarantined in their off-campus housing.

The WECA noted and supports the recommendation in Exhibit 9 that states, "universities should be required to take responsibility for minimizing COVID-19 risks in neighborhoods stemming from the increased number of students that will be required to live off-campus, including ensuring students are tested and, if necessary, quarantined on campus."

In our August 12, 2020 comments, we stated, "the WECA recommends that universities (including GWU) strengthen their penalties for off-campus student violations to act as a stronger deterrent to student behavior adversely affecting off-campus residential neighborhoods (including high-rises and single family homes." Today, we want to further recommend that the Commission conditionally require any universities with any suspended conditions of previously-approved Campus Plans to COVID-19 test **all** of its students – both on and off campus (e.g., in the Foggy Bottom-West End neighborhood) – and to quarantine all students, as necessary, in on campus university facilities.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.