

January 30, 2006

Hon. Fran P. Mainella
Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Federal Advisory Committee Act

Dear Mrs. Mainella:

Reference is made to my letter to you of November 15, 2005 regarding the violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act ("FACA") by the National Park Service. I think you will agree that I should have had a response by now.

As I stated in my November 15 letter, the National Park Service has violated the procedural and substantive provisions of FACA by the control of certain Park Service officials over the Georgetown Waterfront Commission in the development of the design, boundaries, and contents of the Georgetown Waterfront Park.

I do not intend in this letter to reiterate the reasons for my contentions as I believe they are adequately explained in the November 15 letter. However, there is a new development which reinforces what I have asserted previously in this matter.

On Tuesday, January 17, 2006, I attended the organizational meeting of Friends of the Georgetown Waterfront Park, a new membership organization which urges the Park Service to proceed immediately with the development and construction of the Georgetown Waterfront Park. It appears that Friends was established because of an internal disagreement among members of the Georgetown Waterfront Commission regarding the current plan for the waterfront.

As in previous meetings of the Georgetown Waterfront Commission, Park Service officials John Parsons and Sally Blumenthal were present and took a dominant role in the discussions. Shortly after a few introductory remarks by the president of Friends, Mr. Parsons was called upon to address the group. He gave a short history of the efforts to develop the park and then to my utter astonishment stated that in order to promote this park, "we formed the [Georgetown Waterfront] Commission." I have emphasized the "we" as it supports my contention that the Park Service and the Commission have existed since its

inception in such a close and cooperative relationship as to have required the Park Service to obtain a charter for the Commission in compliance with FACA. This new organization, Friends, with which Mr. Parsons and Ms. Blumenthal are closely associated, brooks no dissent or diversity of opinion. I personally was unable to discuss alternatives to the plans for the waterfront as urged by the Park Service. I was told by the president of Friends that if I wished to discuss alternatives to this plan I should arrange for my own meeting. I was also told by a leading member of Friends that decisions on the waterfront were now based on politics, not urban planning.

Using a model of the Georgetown Waterfront Park as proposed by the Park Service, Ms. Blumenthal pointed out and explained the various design elements planned for the Park. I was again rebuffed when I attempted to suggest alternatives. Ms. Blumenthal stated, if I understood her correctly, that construction bids for phase 1 of the Park were imminent and that any modifications to its design were out of the question.

As you know, the Georgetown Waterfront Commission is a small self-appointed non representative group of Georgetown residents who mean well. However, for years it has provided a platform for Mr. Parsons and Ms. Blumenthal to advance their ideas for the Georgetown waterfront. Of critical importance here, the Commission is on record supporting Georgetown University's boathouse at the proposed location within the C&O Canal National Historical Park, a site clearly outside the jurisdiction of the Commission. The real reason for this support is to exclude this boathouse from consideration at an alternative site on the western edge of the Georgetown Waterfront Park at 34th St. Obviously, the Commission did not consider or care about the adverse impact of locating this boathouse in the C&O Canal Park.

I am advised by Mary L. Kendall, Deputy Inspector General of the Department of the Interior, that my suggestion that you pass along my letter of November 15 to the Solicitor was appropriate. Please provide this letter to that official conducting the investigation and review of this matter. In the meantime, may I have at least a telephone call identifying that official.

I shall await your response.

Sincerely yours,

Robert B. Norris