

September 25, 2005

Dear Ms. Mainella:

Over the past year, ANC 3D has sent several letters to the National Park Service objecting to the process the NPS has followed to permit placement of a private boathouse in a federal park by Georgetown University. The three miles of the C&O Canal National Historic Park that are in the District of Columbia are, for the most part, in ANC 3D's commission area, yet NPS staff members have failed to include ANC 3D in any discussions or notifications -- see our request for consulting status below. Only a sliver of the park is in the Georgetown ANC (2E) and is the reason they could support the boathouse and a swap of useless upstream bottomland for this prime piece of parkland. ANC 3D opposes the placement of the Georgetown University boathouse in the C&O Canal Historic Park and our letters to you and Mr. Lawler have clearly reflected our position. ANC 3D has unanimously (7-0-0) and consistently voted to oppose this proposal by the National Park Service and does so again by means of this email.

At the same time the NPS/Georgetown boathouse issue is being considered, communities that surround Georgetown are dealing with the DDOT and NPS-endorsed proposal to remove Whitehurst Freeway to allow a better view of the parkland and river. (Actually, the public recognizes it is the developers who feel they are unable to charge top dollar for a view of an elevated roadway that is driving the freeway removal.) Whitehurst has 15 years of life left which causes the tax payers of the District to resist spending unnecessary funds to have the Whitehurst removed at this time. Besides, the alternative is not acceptable. Keeping the Whitehurst ensures that traffic can move around Georgetown, and we also recognize it is especially effective when the Potomac River rises and floods lower K Street. We cannot accept the arguments being put forth by Sally Blumenthal -- that the Whitehurst Freeway blocks access to the park. Actually, the Whitehurst ensures access to the park by keeping traffic above and off lower K Street. Its removal would create a terrible bottleneck and safety hazard for commuters and residents, and it would prevent any sane person from attempting to cross K Street to reach the Georgetown Waterfront Park.

Please do not allow construction on the Georgetown Waterfront Park at 34th St. to begin until a full Environmental Impact Statement is undertaken by NPS for the proposed Georgetown University boathouse and that the EIS considers alternative locations for the private boathouse, including the site at 34th and K Sts. now scheduled for redevelopment/"greening" in October. To begin construction at the downstream end of the "non-motorized boathouse zone" before resolving the controversial Georgetown University proposal at the upstream end of the zone which NPS has extended into the C&O Canal National Historic Park without extending the zone downstream past 34th St.), would be inappropriate if not illegal. It would also be unwise to undertake any action to improve the park without a thorough review of the flood plain in which it is located.

ANC 3D would be appreciate an acknowledgment of this email.

Alma Gates
Chair, ANC 3D