

September 12, 2005
Georgetown University Boathouse proposal

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for taking the time during the C&O Canal NHPark Advisory Commission meeting on Friday, to listen to our concerns about the Georgetown University (GU)boathouse proposal. We are hopeful that the National Park Service (NPS) will withdraw from the current boathouse proposal until an updated comprehensive plan of the waterfront has been done and an Environmental Impact Statement conducted of the non-motorized boathouse zone.

We have heard that construction on the Georgetown Waterfront Park (the "greening" of the parking lot) is scheduled to begin in October, at 34th St. and K/Water St., and we would appreciate your consideration of a postponement of construction at that location until the Georgetown University boathouse Environmental Assessment process has been completed.

The NPS could begin the "greening" project at Wisconsin Ave., or another location somewhere between 34th St. and Wisconsin Ave. By doing so, the 34th St. site would remain available for consideration as an alternative location for the GU boathouse (or better yet, a Georgetown "universal" boathouse, open to collegiate, high school and public programs, and co-financed by university and public funding). The 34th St. location has many advantages over the C&O Canal NHPark site and provides a safer, more accessible location on degraded land while protecting and preserving the narrow, fragile undeveloped national historical park site which is a floodplain.

During the DC Council Roundtable hearing on the GU boathouse on June 22, Chairman Carol Schwartz asked NPS-John Parsons why the 1980s boathouse zone had been expanded and extended into the C&O Canal NHPark. "Doesn't anyone care?" she asked, to which Mr. Parsons replied that the boathouse zone was just a "general guideline," implying that the original zone was flexible and could be moved downstream beyond 34th St. just as it could be moved upstream and into the C&O Canal NH Park.

In view of the level of controversy over the GU boathouse proposal, NPS should not want to rush into construction at 34th St., thereby precluding moving the GU boathouse to a more suitable site.

Thank you for your consideration of these views.

Sincerely,

Sally Strain
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