



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L32 (NCR-LRP)

JUN 13 2003

Maurice J. Terman, Chairman
Nation's Capital Boundary Stones Committee
National Capital Bicentennial Commission
P.O. Box 200
Washington, D.C. 20044-0200

Dear Mr. Terman:

The National Park Service appreciates your efforts, as well as those of the Nation's Capital Boundary Stones Committee, to protect and the preserve the original government line of survey for the District of Columbia. The importance of these lines in the establishment of the Federal district is an important facet of American history that you and others understand well as expressed in your actions and efforts over an extended period of time.

The National Park Service, as well as its predecessor, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, has taken a keen interest in protecting the stones that continue to mark the line of survey for the District of Columbia as revised by the Act of Retrocession in 1846. We have provided assistance in many ways to preserve, protect, and relocate the stones if the need arose. As you are aware, three of the boundary stones are located partially, and in some instances entirely, on land that we administer.

In December 2002, we related to you and the Committee that the National Park Service had undertaken a study of the records to better ascertain what entity actually owns the stones and what entity is responsible to preserve the lines of survey. This research required an extensive effort so as to thoroughly review all available records. Our research has found that the 27 markers that define the limits of the District of Columbia are a responsibility that has remained with the District of Columbia Government since the appointment of the first Commissioners in 1791.

Annual reports to Congress between 1901 and 1903 from the District of Columbia Government, address the request for funding to protect and preserve the stones so that the lines dividing the jurisdictional territory of the District of Columbia from the State of Maryland, could be preserved and made clear to all. The accuracy of the lines and the preservation of the stones are a responsibility of the District of Columbia. The line should be periodically reviewed by representatives from the District with the Governor of the State of Maryland.

These findings, in our view, do not diminish the goals of your efforts, or the potential for attaining and recording interests in land that will protect an area surrounding the stones. Nor do the findings lessen the goal of identifying the importance of the stones in American history. We will continue to work cooperatively with the Commission, but will now do so as an affected land manager, rather than as the prospective federal agent responsible for protecting, preserving and verifying the accurate location of the lines that continue to be identified by the stones. The results of our study are enclosed.

We regret any inconvenience or delay that has been experienced during our research on this matter and its review for legal consistency. We have appraised representatives of the District of Columbia Department of Transportation of our findings and they are willing to undertake their responsibilities for management of these historic resources. We look forward to introducing you to John Dietrick, Chief Engineer of the District of Columbia.

I look forward to meeting with you on June 20, 2003. If you have any questions in advance of the meeting please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 619-7025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JG Parsons', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John G. Parsons,
Associate Regional Director
Lands, Resources and Planning

cc:
John Dietrick
District of Columbia Department of Transportation