

Frederick Hill, Chairman, Board of Zoning Adjustment

I've lived in Cleveland Park for 48 years at 3614 34th St. N.W., within six blocks of the Idaho site. My three children went to John Eaton and we love the neighborhood. I'd like to contribute to an even more resilient DC by supporting the temporary housing facility for Ward 3. I believe it will help strengthen the social fabric across neighborhoods and break the cycle of poverty for young children across the city.

For the last 5 years, I've volunteered at Bright Beginnings, a daycare for homeless children, on 1st and M Street N.W. It provides a rich and safe learning environment and nutritious meals, and allows their parents to work. It will increase my sense of well-being and security if Cleveland Park contributes to closing the DC General Shelter, and gives hope and support for struggling families to stabilize their lives.

The design of the facility is not perfect. I wanted a kitchen on every floor. It's too expensive. Others wanted individual family bathrooms and fewer floors. That's not possible. I wanted a day-care center within the facility. The founder of Bright Beginnings advised me that that would be way too expensive. She told me: "Buy a bus and bring the preschoolers to Bright Beginnings.

We will work around the constraints. The families should be able to cook sometimes to learn how to shop and prepare nutritious meals for their families before they move to rapid rehousing. Laura Zeilinger will work on getting a cooking area on the first floor, near the warming ovens. We can have cooking classes for adults and children.

The Ward 3 facility can provide a rich educational environment, with 100's of neighborhood volunteers accompanying small groups of families to our several local parks, libraries and museums. For the few children who enter John Eaton, we can provide any needed tutors. I'm signing up for a plot in the community garden so I can plant with the children.

I urge you to move forward on approving the variances for this facility at 3320 Idaho Ave. NW: more than one primary structure on the lot, the number of stories and building height as well as the requirement for a loading dock. The programs that the neighbors help with will convey our welcome to these families and our belief in their dignity.

Sincerely, Jean M. Johnson, PhD