ANN F. COHEN & JONATHAN D. STRUM
5342 28TH STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

29 February 2000

Ms. Shelia Reid, Chair
Board of Zoning Appeals
441 Fourth St. NW, Suite 210S
Washington, DC 20001

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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

RE: APPLICATION NO. 16556

Dear Ms. Reid:

I am writing in support of the Jewish Primary Day School's application for a temporary site for the school in Shepherd Park. My husband and I have lived in Washington for 25 years. It is our home, we went to graduate school here, we married here and we have had our children here. We affirmatively choose to live in the city because we believe in cities and want to support a thriving city environment.

We had our children later than most, so while we have lived in the city for 25 years as adults, our children are too young for elementary school at this time. When the time comes, our children will attend JPDS if it has a home in the city. Without a Jewish Day School of the caliber of JPDS in the city we will, after 25 years, be forced to leave the city and move to a place where we can obtain a quality Jewish education for our children. My husband grew up in Israel, his family lives there and it is important to us that our children receive the 'dual' education offered by JPDS.

My husband and I have supported DC schools through property taxes, mentoring, clean ups in our neighborhood schools and in other ways. We have been the beneficiary of the city services most notably when our house had a major fire and our baby and home were saved by the cities finest firefighters. In addition, as an employer of 1200 people in this city from 1994 to October of this year, when I became a private consultant, my office adopted a DC School – Walker Jones Elementary, at K and First Street NW. Literally hundreds of my employees, including myself, mentored, coached basketball, raised money, flipped pancakes and more to support Walker Jones Elementary.

We tell you all this to let you know we believe in DC, its communities, its future, its success, and indeed, its renaissance. It is critical that this city, in every neighborhood, accept a broader and diverse constituency. We believe the city should adopt as part of its vision the commitment to accommodate the positive aspects of growth across a wide spectrum. We believe the application of JPDS will bring to Shepherd Park a broader and more diverse constituency, yet one that works in harmony with Shepherd Park. I know the JPDS is committed to solving concerns such as traffic, congestion and safety. I urge the BZA to allow this working together to proceed and do something really good for DC and many committed families at the same time. This city is at its best when it accepts that which is good and works to accommodate. That is precisely the situation faced by the JPDS application presented to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Without a temporary home, the JPDS will be unable to continue its tradition, and families, including mine, will be forced to leave the city after living in it and believing in it for so long.

BZA
Case No. 16556
Exhibit No. 127

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16556
EXHIBIT NO.127

We urge you to act fast, to give security to the parents, children, teachers and staff so that that may plan the next year and assure this community that JPDS is "open for school". The school must be able to focus on its long term plans, and build for next year's temporary status and continue the central critical mission of education. Please approve this application now, do not let this process drag out – let Shepherd Park and JPDS begin the process of building together and creating a partnership that works to accommodate. Let us learn from one another and give all DC residents reason to be proud that this city put accommodation at the forefront.

Sincerely,



Ann Cohen and Jonathan Strum

Cc: Councilmember Charlene Drew Jarvis
Councilmembers at Large
Mr. Andrew Altman, Office of Planning