COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

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CHARLENE DREW JARVIS
Councilmember - Ward 4
Chairperson
Committee on
Economic Development

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Finance & Revenue
Government Operations

March 15, 2000

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Ms. Sheila B. Reid
Chair
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application No. 16556

Dear Ms Reid:

As the representative to the Council from Ward 4, I appreciate an opportunity to provide input for your consideration of the application for a special exception to locate the Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital (JPDS) in the Chevorah Tifereth Israel and Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah synagogues. The synagogues are located at 7712 and 7701 16th Street in the Shepherd Park community of Ward 4.

On March 2, 2000, representatives from JPDS met with me and Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners Joseph H. Hairston, Jourdenia Brown, and Douglas Sloan of ANC 4A. This meeting provided us with an excellent opportunity to gain a keen understanding of the importance of JPDS's remaining in the District and its immediate need to secure a temporary location.

We were also briefed about the JPDS plan to complete construction in the next three years of a permanent facility on Chesapeake Street, NW, in the Forest Hills section of the District. This construction also requires approval by the DC Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) and the temporary location of JPDS for the next three years.

However, it is the application for *temporary* occupancy that has proven to be most troubling for some of my constituents. Residents in the Shepherd Park community have learned of significant opposition to the location of JPDS on Chesapeake Street. They have repeatedly expressed concern that the Tifereth Israel and Ohev Sholom synagogues will become permanent locations for JPDS. Their concern is fueled by the school's own admission that while these two sites are inadequate for future needs, JPDS has been unable to locate any other suitable District site.

In addition, residents have expressed concern about the impact of increased traffic in their

BZA
Case No. 16556
Exhibit No. 288

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16556
EXHIBIT NO.288

neighborhood. Sixteenth Street, which is already heavily used by rush-hour commuters, may experience even more traffic as a result of a Montgomery County plan to divert traffic from Georgia Avenue in downtown Silver Spring to Sixteenth Street. They are also concerned about conflicts with the Department of Public Works over use of adjacent alleys for drop-off of youngsters.

Finally, many of my constituents point to the experience they have had with the operation of a day care center at 7701 Sixteenth Street, NW. They are concerned that they will now have at two locations in their community the same experience that began for them in 1986 when a day care center opened at 7701 16th Street to provide care for forty-eight children from 8:30 am until 1:00 pm. Through continuous expansion by 1992, the center had grown to sixty-five children and operated from 8:30 am until 4:00 pm. This use was granted by a special exception from the Board of Zoning which conditioned its decision with eight requirements. The BZA order was not adhered to, and neither the BZA, nor any other District agency, enforced the failure to comply with the BZA order. Neighbors would not like a repetition and thus, many do not support this special exception. I understand the concerns of these constituents.

Just as I have heard from my constituents who are opposed to the application for a temporary location of the JPDS, I have also heard from my constituents, and many residents in other parts of the community, who are in support of the application before the BZA.

Given the concerns of both supporters and opponents of the application before the BZA, it is my view that the best solution to the immediacy of the need of the JPDS is for all of us to work aggressively to identify another location for the school.

To that end, I was much encouraged by a meeting on March 10, 2000 that representatives from JPDS and the Mayor's office, and I had with Dr. Julius Nimmons, President of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) at which Dr. Nimmons expressed his willingness to identify space on the UDC campus for JPDS. While there is no certainty that the UDC site will meet the needs of the school, I remain committed to helping JPDS remain in the District and will continue to pursue other locations with them.

Sincerely,

CHARLENE DREW JARVIS
Councilmember, Ward 4

cc: Board members
ANC 4A Commissioners
Shepherd Park Citizen's Association
At-Large Councilmembers
Office of the Mayor
Office of Intergovernmental Relations
The Jewish Primary Day School