3/21/00

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to address the Board of Zoning Adjustments.

My name is Sally Ethelston; I reside at 1425 Juniper Street, NW, which is located <250 feet from Tefereth Israel Synagogue, one of the sites proposed for the private school making application. I am Vice President for Communications with a non-profit organization based here in the District of Columbia. I have spent all but 2 of the past 17 years as a resident of the District of Columbia. My husband, Ernie Jackson, and I have lived in the neighborhood for two and a half years.

My opposition to BZA Application #16556 is based on three areas of concern:

- the safety of both current residents and the children at the private school should the proposed location for the school be approved;
- the inadequacy of the traffic management and related plans for dealing with cars;
- my and my husband's own desire to continue living in purely residential neighborhood.

First, safety: Heavy traffic is a fact of life on 16th Street, particularly on weekdays. Twice in February, an accident on Missouri Avenue resulted in traffic backing up on all major arterial streets heading downtown: Georgia Avenue, 13th Street and 16th Street. Drivers seeking to avoid these and other traffic jams *routinely* use Juniper and Jonquil streets as speedways – trying to get around any traffic jam as quickly as possible. Introduce into this situation some 200 children getting in and out of cars, and crossing 16th Street at some point during the day, regardless of how well they behave or are chaperoned, and you have a recipe for disaster. Then add in the extensive work envisioned for this section of 16th Street starting ~~in early 2001~~ within a year and the disaster becomes a catastrophe waiting to happen. In addition, I am concerned about the safety of those children who now walk through the neighborhood on their way to our community's public school. Like other people, they use the alleyways as shortcuts to school on both ends of Juniper and Jonquil streets. Who will look out for them?

Regarding the traffic management and related plans, I must begin by saying that I find it ludicrous. First, it is based on the assumption that the number of cars traveling to and from the school each day can be cut significantly, even

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as the enrollment is allowed to increase by some 30 students. Second, it is based upon the use of alleyways that were never intended for this use, and in the District of Columbia as we all know, repairing streets is at a premium, let alone repairing alleyways. Third, the plan does not account for human nature, nor for the impact of the planned street work on 16th Street beginning in 2001. People dropping off their children for school *will* sometimes find it necessary to park on either Juniper or Jonquil and I cannot tell you how dangerous it is for *residents* of the neighborhood attempting to turn left onto 16th Street when cars are parked all the way up to the stop signs on Jonquil and Juniper.

Concerns for the residential nature of Shepherd Park. As I mentioned, my husband and I have lived in the neighborhood for just over two years. Why did we move there? Because it offered us the promise of living in a purely residential neighborhood, yet with all the things that make a neighborhood a good place to be: a fine *public* elementary school within walking distance of our home; a diversity of religious institutions, also within walking distance from our home; good neighbors who are helpful, cordial and care about each other in the best way possible. Our neighborhood is not a commercial district; it is not Cleveland Park, ~~or even~~ Chevy Chase Circle. It is residential, a place where yes, kids can *still* ride their bikes or use rollerskates on the sidewalks, where we can come home during weekdays and in evenings and park in front of our own front doors, where we welcome the presence of religious institutions that enrich the lives of those they serve and for whom we have tolerated the occasional inconvenience.

or Columbia Heights or Adams Morgan

We do not want the nature of our neighborhood to change further and unnecessarily. There are now three private educational institutions operating within a two-block radius of our home. Isn't this enough for one small neighborhood like Shepherd Park?