Statement of Audrey Little in Opposition to BZA Application No. 16556

My husband and I are resident owners of a house at 1439 Juniper St., which is just two doors from Tifereth Israel synagogue. We have two school-aged children. Our 10 year-old daughter attended Shepherd Elementary from pre-k through 3rd grade. She is a 4th grader at a church affiliated school for girls. Our 4 year-old son currently is a pre-K student at Shepherd.

I am actively involved in the education of my children. I have served as a room parent, member of the Shepherd's local school based management committee. I am serving my second term as 1st Vice President of the Shepherd Elementary PTA.
I also work outside the home,employed as attorney with the Department of Labor. I too want my children to have the best education possible. I do not blame the parents of JPDS for wanting keep a successful school open, and I can understand their desire to be in DC. I do, however, have many problems with the school's proposal to move in next door with my neighbor – Tifereth Israel.

A school with 85 students at 14 teachers and staff is certain to cause objectionable traffic conditions. I am most troubled by the plan to take over the public alleys as the last leg in the fixed route to the school. Though I park my car on the street, I regularly use the public alley next to the synagogue. I park on the north side of Juniper facing west. To go east, I drive north through the alley and then take Jonquil eastbound. A fair number of people use the alleys in this manner. If a car is traveling south when I turn to enter the alley, I have to wait until it exits onto Juniper Street before proceeding. The day school's proposal would cause congestion in the alleys and adjoining streets. Little Exhibit A – Alley in use, two cars cannot pass. Cars would have to wait on either on Jonquil or Juniper causing back ups into the street.

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The public alleys between the 1400 blocks of Jonquil and Juniper Streets are used in the morning and the evening by Shepherd parents. The traffic from Shepherd does not end until after 6:30 p.m. Over 100 children are enrolled in the afterschool program at Shepherd. The program does not end until 6:30 p.m., the height of rush hour. So many parents use the alleys to avoid 16th Street. JPDS parents using the alleys would increase the traffic levels in the public alleys to intolerable levels.

Moreover, 40-50 cars in addition to the volume of cars already using the alleys will cause more wear and tear. The city should not be put to the expense of having to repave because of the excessive traffic, particularly where the people contributing to the premature deterioration of the roadways do not contribute – in the way taxes – to the cost of repair.

Locating the day school at Tifereth Israel would exacerbate parking problems for Juniper/Jonquil residents. Parents coming to the school in the evening will have to park on Juniper and Jonquil Streets. There is no parking on 16th Street at the hour. Currently on the Wednesdays, when Hebrew school lets out in the evenings, the parents park in the 1400 block of Juniper Street for 10 to 15 minutes. It is the time when I am arriving home from work. My children and I have to park up the street and walk back to the house. This happens all to often on Wednesdays. If JPDS were to move in next door, it would happen every evening, because parents picking up their children from the afterschool program will park in front of the houses closest to the synagogue. On Wednesdays you will have two sets of parents picking up kids at 6 p.m. – the Hebrew School parents and the JPDS parents.

The traffic management plan assumes that the only cars that will be on the road during the morning drop off and afternoon pick up will be those going to JPDS. But Juniper is used by the residents, by commuters, and Sheperd parents. When cars are parked on

both sides of the Juniper Street, it is nearly impossible to have two lanes for traffic. We can expect major back ups on Juniper street. The parents dropping off at the synagogues would not be the only drivers on the road at that time. Rush hour is in full swing at that hour and cars turning left onto Juniper, at same time cars in the morning queue are unloading passengers and then turning right onto 16th street, and another car traveling westbound on Juniper will clog the streets.

The normal day-to-day operations of the synagogue already impact our quiet enjoyment. Tifereth Israel, like other churches and synagogues in the city, does not have an accessory parking lot. When there are services and other activities at the synagogue, on street parking for neighbors is scarce or non-existent. But we are tolerant of the parking problems that regularly accompany Saturday services, Sunday and Wednesday Hebrew school, holy day services, concerts, various board and committee meetings, the daily operations of the child care center, Sunday evening tutoring for Shepherd Students, the weddings, funerals and other activities normally associated with the synagogue. We are less charitable when the synagogue rents its space to non-synagogue entities for Wednesday weight watcher meetings, Sunday afternoon church services, and Friday and Saturday dances and parties, but we suffer in silence. Little Exhibit B is a copy of the calendar from the TI website – shows activities are scheduled several days during week, and at all times during the day. The calendar does not show the Sunday church services or church related functions.

Except for proposed closing of the Child Development Center the synagogue does not plan to curtail any of its activities. In fact the OP statement indicates that Hebrew classes will continue. Moving a day school for 85 students and 14-18 staff into an active, thriving synagogue would deprive nearby property owners of what little quiet enjoyment we have left. Particularly, where, as here, there

are no on site parking facilities and no buffer between the proposed school and neighboring residences.

The play area is inadequate. Exhibit C shows Sunday Hebrew students playing on the sidewalk in front of the Juniper Street entrance to the Synagogue.

Child development center and a private school are different and the zoning regulations recognizes that they are different and imposes differing requirements for exceptions

Enrollment currently at the center is very low – judging from the traffic these days I would be surprised if more than 25 preschoolers were currently enrolled. The arrival and departure times are staggered. Cars are parked and parents walk the children into school. The child development center was established, over objection of some property owners, partly because 25% of the students were to come from the neighborhood. In the early years they did. I would regularly see parents and caregivers walking to the synagogue. Today most kids enrolled come in cars bearing Maryland license plates.
When the Child Development Center was at peak enrollment parking was a problem – always park in front of my house first even if parking available on 16th street, only since the instant application was filed has there ever been any conscious effort to park on 16 street first.

Unrestricted spaces on Jonquil are used by teachers and parents attending Shepherd.

Board cannot consider activities of proposed school separate from the activities of the synagogue. Cumulative impact of activities from both school and shul would make life intolerable on Juniper.

If only Interfaith [redacted] had the facilities that JPDS is leasing at Adas Israel –

If only Interfaith Israel –

Morning and

– first meeting to talk to neighbors February 16

It's not a political issue
It's not an educational issue
It's

Photographs Taken Sunday, March 5, 2000
Recess du[redacted]ng Hebrew School
In front of 1439 Juniper Street, N.W., Facing West





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Photographs Taken Sunday, March [redacted]2000
Drop off for Hebrew School
Alley Next to Tifereth Israel Facing North





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