Board of Zoning Adjustment

Application No . 16556

Testimony
March 21, 2000

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Washington, D.C. 20012

Good afternoon, Chairperson Reid and Members of the Board

I am Jan D. Gray, resident at 1650 Jonquil Street, N.W. Washington D.C. I was born in Washington, D.C. approximately 38 years ago and attended primary and secondary school as well as college and law school in the District. I am firmly committed to the city and one of its most ardent supporters. As a little girl, my mother had me wearing buttons and putting up posters advocating the initiation of home rule. I am presently a civil rights lawyer and have always been involved in community activities.

After graduation from law school, I had the opportunity to purchase my first home in 1989 in the Columbia Heights neighborhood. I had convinced my then fiancée, later my husband, to sell his place in McLean, Virginia and move into the city. We moved our furniture to our new home by Florida Avenue from my Capital Hill apartment over all the construction boards lining U Street because of the Metro. We believed in the city and all its promise.

For the approximately 10 years I lived in Columbia Heights, I was very active in the community. I organized block clean-ups, took the neighborhood children to the library one a week, gave the neighborhood children odd jobs, talked to them, listened to them, guided them. I was very well respected in the neighborhood once they knew I was a homegrown D.C. girl and I relished the opportunity to make a difference. I talked to the drug dealers who lived in our community to try to convince them of the effect they were having on the young with some success.

I was elected an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner to 1B07. During that time, I served as a chief negotiator between the warring factions in the ANC and assisted the ANC in being able to move forward on the community's business despite the major personality and philosophical differences. Also as ANC 1BO7, I was very active in trying to locate a tenant to take over the space at UDC's Harvard Street Campus after UDC vacated the building. Because of the budget crunch in the District, UDC was required to move out of the building and seek a sale or tenant. This former site of DC Teacher's College was a school with offices, exercise room and plenty of classrooms. It had enclosed parking for numerous cars and an enclosed large outdoor area for children to play. It would have been the perfect site for a school such as JDPS who wants to add

BZA
CASE No. 16556
EXHIBIT No. 327

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16556
EXHIBIT NO.327

vitality to a community. The community would have welcomed it with open arms and JDPS knew 2 years ago it needed new space. I should not have to pay for their failure to plan.

I left my wonderful neighbors in Columbia Heights and moved to my current location because we were looking for a quiet, integrated residential neighborhood in the District. I did not want to move to Bethesda, Maryland as most of my friends have. Most of my friends believe you have to move to Maryland in order to be able to live in a quiet neighborhood because the District government does not provide the necessary support. I wanted to prove them wrong.

We wanted to be able to enjoy our property, to have our friends and children be able to enjoy the amenities of Rock Creek Park across the street. I look forward to the seeing the deer in my yard especially in the day. It broke my heart when motorists speeding through 17th Street killed two deer, one a fawn, this past year. I believed we would have less traffic and I would not have to be involved monitoring traffic, dealing with the litter from the passing motorists as well as school children that deface property as well. Unfortunately, this is not the case

Upon moving to my current location, I was dismayed to realize that I lived on a speedway. I live at the corner of Jonquil, Juniper and 17th Street. It is a five way intersection located at the end of the block from Ohev Shalom. It is governed by five stop signs that the majority of the motorist do not stop for. Even worse, some of the vehicles travel through the stop signs at rates as high as 50 miles per hour. This starts at approximately 5:30 am and continues to approximately 1:00 am. Sometime they miss the road and I have ruts in my lawn the next day.

Traffic uses the streets I abut as a short-cut to bypass the light at Kalmia Road. Both official and unofficial vehicles from Walter Reed cut down 17th and up Juniper towards 16th street to commute back and forth from their location on 16th and Alaska to their location in Forest Glen as well as going to work at their D.C. location.

Lowell parents in their first full year of operation on 17th and Kalmia also use Jonquil Street Westbound to circumvent their traffic plan. These parents actually go South on 16th Street, past Kalmia and make the next right on Jonquil in order to make a right on 17th Street and circumvent the Que forming off Kalmia. The majority of the parents that do this also run the stop sign.

We also have commuter traffic from Chevy Chase and other local traffic using this shortcut. Sadly, it is my expectation knowing human nature that the JDPS parents coming from areas West of Rock Creek park including Maryland will do the same. If this occurs you will have parents making a right onto Juniper attempting to make a right into the alley while the parents coming up Juniper will be attempting to make a left into the alley further damaging the grass area by the alley. See photo attached.

The noise coming from this intersection is horrendous. People honk their horns, get into arguments especially in the spring and summer and hit people in the rear when that person has stopped at the stop sign. We are a road rage incident waiting to happen.

After a little boy on his bicycle was nearly hit at this intersection, I contacted the 4th District police station and requested assistance. It is my understanding that the first morning they came

they wrote approximately 60 warning tickets. They used two vehicles. I also petitioned our ANC and they voted unanimously in 11/99 to support our request for more police enforcement.

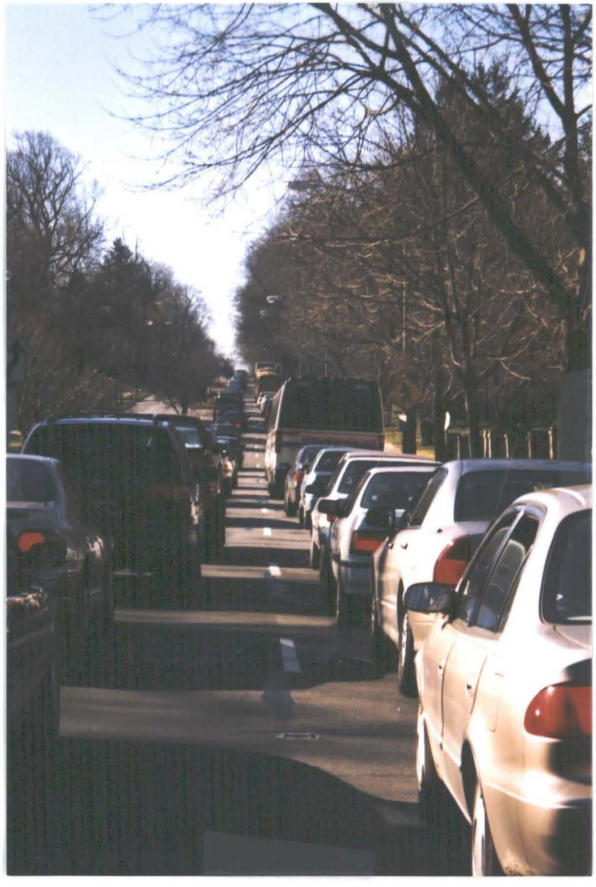
I am doing the best I can to try to reestablish and maintain the quiet enjoyment of our neighborhood for which the residents have worked so hard. I can not do it by myself. Many of my neighbors are elderly and do not have the energy to pursue this struggle. I am trying to focus on getting Lowell and Walter Reed to get their house in order with respect to using their traffic plans and stop using our neighborhood as a cut through. I can not fight yet another institution.

Please realize what is at stake. This is a land use issue. To grant Ohev Shalom an exception to house a school at this location even temporarily will give them the right to say in its next BZA application that it has already housed 120 students at this location for three years and they only want an extension like as the Preschool already established at Tifereth Isreal did. Please do not loose site of this. It is critical that you understand the dynamics of this community TODAY while it is still a stable community. A community where an integrated set of neighbors respect, and look out for each other and still chat on the sidewalk because they feel comfortable. A neighborhood where D.C.'s young still want to live. We want to keep our neighborhood intact.

Just as JDPS does not want to leave the District, neither do I and I was here first.

I have appended pictures used during my witness testimony for the ANC

Monday, March 6, 2000 - 8:30 A.M. - 1 Day before traffic simulation



16th & Jonquil looking South towards D.C.
I am standing in middle of traffic between 2 lanes because traffic is at standstill



16th & Jonquil looking North towards Silver Spring
I am standing in ~~middle~~ middle of street; traffic at standstill. Light is Kalmia. Traffic both directions is as far as you can see.

Monday March 6, [redacted]00 - 8:30 A.M. - 1 day before traffic simulation

Joquil looking east toward 16th Street

Traffic at standstill Blocking intersection





Traffic at standstill blocking intersection

JDPS 3/7/00 traffic simulation



16th Street Northbound at Juniper

Cars + Bergmann truck waiting to make left onto Juniper

JDPS's traffic simulation 3/7/00 Election Day



← Cars on Juniper going east to 16th St. waiting to make right onto 16th St.

Only 1 lane at a time because of parked cars

March 7, 200[redacted] - JDPS - traffic simulation - Election Day
Maryland School closed

Juniper looking east to 16th St. Cars have to veer around parked cars.
Abnormal parking on Juniper

Note car veering back into lane to get around parked car in front of it not in picture
Bus waiting to make left hand turn.

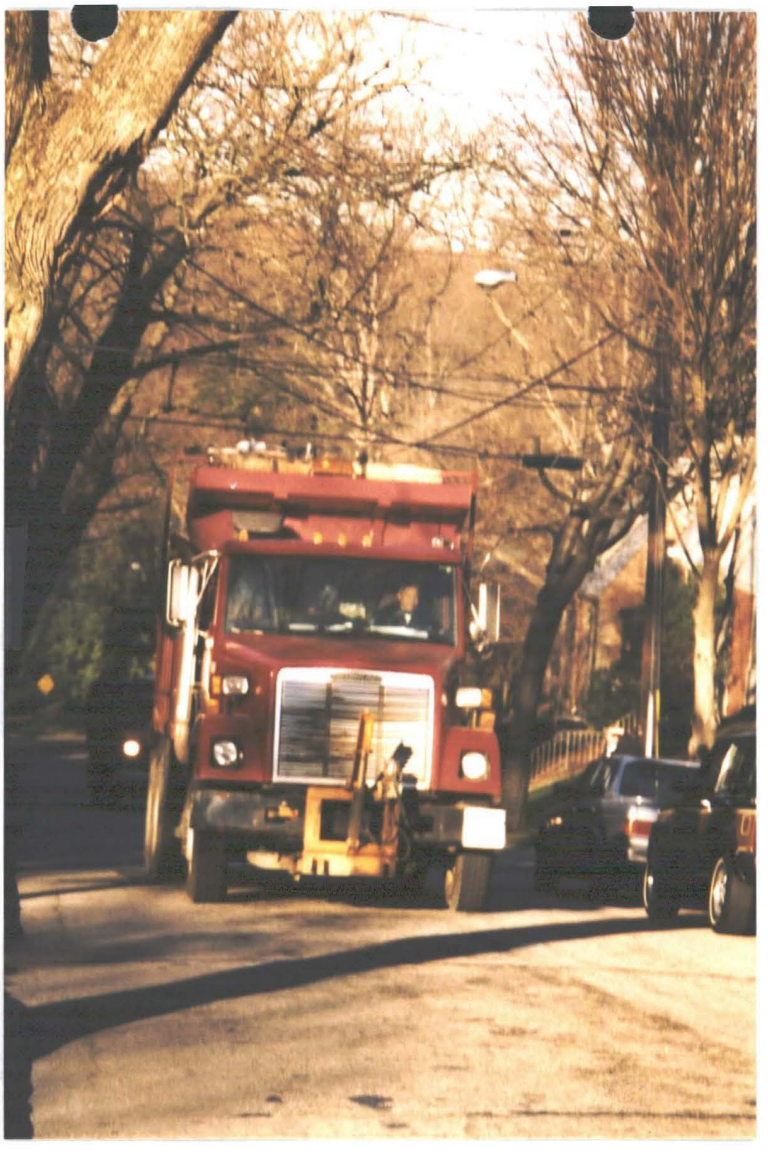


My neighbors also observing traffic simulation →



Cars going east up Juniper to 16th St. Waiting for westbound car to pull over into parking lane so they can pass

During JDPS's traffic simulation



JDPS's traffic simulation

March 7, 2000

Election Day

- Maryland Public Schools Closed.
- MD voters allowed to arrive a work late in order to vote

Trucks stopped on Juniper at 16th St to make right turn. Only a couple feet between them and parked cars. Cars cannot make ~~left~~ right onto Juniper from 16th ↓

Traffic on Juniper going east to 16th St. These types of trucks come up Juniper as short cut often. They take up entire lane



JDPS traffic simulation - 3/7/00
Election Day

Resident at corner of Union and the Alley behind Chevra Shalom attempting to exit garage. JPDS van used in simulation forced to use Hanafi (SP) driveway to gain access to resident's car.



→ Resident whose garage exits in alley

← Hanafi (SP) driveway

Thursday - 3/16/00 - Day after 1st BZA Hearing

Parked cars on Juniper between 16th & 17th Street at 8:15 am

I am standing in middle of street

↓





Thursday - 3/16/00 - Day after 1st BZA Hearing

Walter Reed Van traveling West on Juniper from 16th Streets. No room to go around with parked cars. JDB has proposed using vans





Damage to road and grass in front of house on corner of Juniper & the Alley behind Ohev Shalom. Caused by vehicles exiting & entering alley

3/19/00 - Monday - Alley behind Ohev Shalom
recently repaired on 3/14/00 along with Ohev Shalom parking area

Notice trash cans + lids in the street on right. The first house ~~house~~ on left has put their can back. DPW leaves them wherever is convenient for them. Trash is picked up in the alley + on Jonquil + Juniper St. at a convenient time for DPW. Usually ~~between~~ 7:30 – 9:00



Ohev Shalom parking lot - 3/20/00 - 8:45 pm.

car parked on grass and sidewalk because cars parked on other side of streets and Jongril is only 1 lane with parked cars



Other Shalom parking Lot - 3/20/00 - 8:45 pm.

CARS PARKED IN ALLEY



Car blocking alley

Ohev Shalom parking lot - 3/2000 - 8:45 pm.

Only two cars - red van + black car able to park in space where JDPS alleges it will have 3 spaces. Black car is blocking entire width of steps coming from exit. Only a couple of feet in front of red van before it blocks steps on opposite side exit



Cars parked in alley

Chevy Shadow parking lot - 3/20/00 - 5:45 pm.

JDTS says 3 cars will go here. See previous picture for explation

↓ end of building



3/21/00 - 7:45 am. - Black Car attempting to merge into southbound traffic on 16th Street. Black car making left from East side of 16th & Jonquil

Example of unsafe driving



See previous photo



3/21/00 - 7:45 am. Cars parked on West side of Jonquil at 16th Street - 1 lane traffic



Trying to grow grass where white vehicle was parked the night before. This you can see from lack of grass this occurs frequently