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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
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July 19, 2000

Sheila Cross Reid
Chair, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case No. 16559
Field School Special Exception

Dear Ms. Reid:

As the hearings regarding this case continue, it becomes increasingly clear to me as I hope it does to you and the members of the Board that this site does not work for a school. That the Field School has had to present so many different traffic plans, most contradicting earlier plans, makes it so evident that this site is not appropriate for a school nor is it a safe or accessible location. And the ever-new plans that the school presents, usually on the eve of the next hearing or meeting, demonstate a game plan that is manipulative and seriously puts in question the credibility of the current plan on the table.

Foxhall Road has been my residence for twenty-two years and I have been in the neighborhood for 29 years. I care about Foxhall Road and the people who depend on this road. I do not appreciate the school's position that it can make our road safer by adding to the traffic -- to me a rather cavalier approach to traffic control and safety. It seems far more appropriate for the city to first assess all of the traffic patterns in our part of northwest Washington, already highly taxed due to the lack of metro. The convergence of MacArthur Boulevard, Canal Road and Foxhall Road in the morning commute is a disaster. The appropriate load for these various arteries needs to be assessed so that there is a recognized equilibrium. A comprehensive multi-school traffic study was promised as part of the GW at Mount Vernon agreement and to proceed with another school at this time before such a study would be a reckless decision. There is simply no justification for adding another traffic-intensive school to this road and a part of our city that are already overloaded. And because of our parklands on either side of Foxhall and the very small number of cross streets, Foxhall, running on the ridge, takes on a burden and those who rely on it have few other options.

In an attempt to make this site work the Field School now is proposing a special traffic light that will facilitate left and right turns in and out of the school site, as well as a new third lane for stacking, flashing school warning lights, warning signs, a taper lane on the north and one on the south side of the entrance -- all of this in front of the beautiful Belgian residence. Is all of this appropriate for our lovely residential neighborhood? Does it not seem extreme to do all of these major changes to our pastoral road, all for the sake of a three car stacking lane that is questionably safe and long enough? It is ironic that the Cafritz family was responsible, so I understand, for keeping Foxhall as a two-lane road.

At the most recent hearing there was a comment that it was better to have this entrance on a road such as Foxhall as opposed to a side street. One should know that the entrance to Mount Vernon College also used to be on Foxhall but was then prudently moved to W

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Street. The wear and tear of an entrance to an institution on a road like Foxhall -- the multiple turnings in and out - is unthinkable. I know this from my daily use of the road and it is certainly clear from our reports about the volume of traffic on the road, the speed of the traffic on the road and the bend, incline and lack of sight lines on the curving stretch chosen for the school's entrance. And Mount Vernon' s former entrance was on a relatively flat but straight stretch of the road.

Safety is a major concern and those of us who live on and those who use this road regularly understand how this stretch of road cannot accomodate a school in a safe and expeditious manner.

The school finds it a "drop in the bucket" to add more traffic during rush hours. But one needs to factor in the large impact of its traffic on the small window of time when the school will be opening. And much of this traffic will be returning from whence it came adding again to the volume. (And if there had been a right turn only policy, many cars would be passing the school three times!)

I truly object to Field School students testifying at the hearings. At the May 10 hearing several came and many witnessed them being drilled in the hallway by Clay Kaufman of the school faculty as to what they had to say - ie that they used public transportation on a regular basis. This does not enhance the school's credibility and the students should not be manipulated in such a way.

This case has been a long one. I applaud all of you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Dorothy M Woodcock

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