BY FAX

BZA
Case No. 16559-B
Exhibit No. 509

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WASHINGTON, DC 20007

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October 23, 2002

Order
#16559-B

Mr. Kenneth Laden
Associate Director for
Transportation Planning
DC Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, NW
Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Laden:

On August 13, 2002, I sent you a letter requesting information regarding the necessary road work on Whitehaven Parkway associated with St. Patrick's School (BZA Case 16852). After two months, meetings and endless phone calls, the parking signs that were to be installed by July 1 are being installed today. However, I am disappointed that as of today October 23rd there has been no response from DDOT to that letter.

I write today with regard to another school matter on which you also testified before the BZA that allowed Field School to open as planned in early September. On March 27th, when you met with John Finney and me regarding St. Patrick's and we inquired about the necessary road work on Foxhall with regard to Field School, your response was, "if Field School wants to pony up the money to do the road work it could start tomorrow." DDOT now has the $2M in Federal funds to do the proposed upgrades to Foxhall Road but **nothing** has been done. The result of DDOT not fulfilling the conditions it suggested for BZA Order 16559-B have had serious consequences for residents living around the school site as well as the daily traffic on Foxhall Road.

There have been several instances where the drivers of Field School's leased buses from Reston Limousine Service have shown creativity in finding short cuts back to the school rather than follow the cumbersome bus loop that takes them as far away as Georgetown Hospital. They have used Garfield Street to Foxhall, made a left turn onto Foxhall and then made a left hand turn into the school. When caught the drivers altered the route and today they use Foxhall south, turn right onto Whitehaven Parkway, make a U turn, a left off of Whitehaven onto Foxhall Road and a

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right turn into the school. You may recall that during the initial discussions in 2000 there was great concern regarding Field School traffic making left hand turns onto Foxhall Road from either Whitehaven Parkway or W Street. Field School is ultimately responsible for the actions of the drivers of its leased buses but when DDOT approves an overly cumbersome loop for buses that takes them far outside the boundaries of the school, drivers will be creative and find the shortest distance between two points. This is nothing more than human nature seeking the path of least resistance. I might add that the Community Liaison meetings where these matters might be discussed have ceased and none have occurred since April. Even with the meetings, the burden for reporting indiscretions or other matters falls to the community.

This morning a serious accident occurred on Foxhall Road at W Street just south of the school's entrance. It involved a collision between a Waste Management truck and car and resulted in the two men in the Waste Management truck being taken off in ambulances. The driver and passenger of the car, which was at fault, were not injured although the car was destroyed. It also involved a third car being run off of Foxhall Road and a power pole and tree falling onto the truck. You may recall that the average speed on Foxhall is 45 mph and that speed at this intersection claimed the life of an 11-year old boy several years ago.

You will also recall that under the Conditions of the minor modification to BZA Order 16559, condition #2 states: "Installation of two flashing beacons, one on Foxhall Road at the modified southern entrance to the school, and one on Foxhall Road near W Street, approximately 300 feet south of the school entrance." Further, Condition #3 states: Placement of the warning signs as required in condition #17 on page 21 (of the original order.) Condition #17 states: "Before a certificate of occupancy may be issued, school zone warning signs and signs warning drivers on Foxhall Road of the school-entrance traffic control signal must be placed on Foxhall Road."

Perhaps the required flashing beacons might have prevented today's accident by slowing traffic in a school zone, but, the flashing beacons have never been installed and the certificate of occupancy has been issued.

I now have serious concerns regarding the veracity of commitments or recommendations made by DDOT. The required flashing beakers for Field School on Foxhall Road have never been installed although a certificate of occupancy has been issued and Field School is fully operational. The community has waited for over two years for the installation of a traffic signal at Whitehaven Parkway and Foxhall Road and the date of its installation of one of the most closely guarded secrets in the District of Columbia. The required parking trial for St. Patrick's School that was to begin on July 1st is being implemented on October 23rd. Unfortunately, it appears accountability and follow through are not priorities for DDOT. When DDOT-set demonstration projects are not

implemented it is the community that bears the burden for follow up. When conditions handed down by the BZA are not implemented by DDOT it is the community that is impacted. Reminding DDOT of requirements and conditions has become a full-time responsibility and one that the community does not want.

I initially contacted you over two months ago. I am still waiting for the courtesy of a reply and I make the same request today.

Sincerely,

Alma H. Gates

Alma H. Gates
Palisades Traffic Chair

cc: Dan Tangherlini
Kathy Patterson
✓ Jerrily Kress
John Finney
Ann Heuer
Erik Gaull