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March 7, 2000

Ms. Shelia Cross Reid, BZA Chairman
c/o Ms. Jerrily Kress, Director, Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington. DC 20001

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OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

RE: Case No. 16559 – Field School Request for Special Exception

Dear Ms. Reid:

On March 15th, the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) will consider the application of the Field School to relocate to the Cafritz estate on Foxhall Road. Its application states that the school will house some 400 students and staff. The application states that all 74 school employees will drive to work and that its student body will be transported in 139 cars and three vans, all of them converging on Foxhall Road in the middle of the morning rush.

In support of its application, the school has submitted a traffic report prepared by Gorove/Slade, a highly respected firm that has had success in the past at BZA. The Slade report concludes: "The Field School will generate traffic levels which can be accommodated by the public street system without adverse impact." Indeed! The Slade analysis may be flawed because half of its data was collected last April 4th, two days after Easter, a time when at least one school was still on break and Congress was not in session. In any event, Slade's own figures indicate that 120 cars will generate 240 turns off of and back onto Foxhall within, we can reasonably assume, roughly a 20 minute period during the peak morning rush. This translates into 12 turns per minute or one every 5 seconds. And this is just student traffic.

Unfortunately, there is not unanimity in the neighborhood. Some residents fear that the alternative is a large town house development (which would also need BZA approval), but there is no evidence of any such developer proposal yet -- just rumors. Worse yet, some well- meaning residents are actually proposing solutions to the traffic problem, such as prohibiting left turns into the school from the southbound lane of Foxhall, only during the morning rush hour, say some, while others think it should be permanent. There is even a report that the executive board of one citizens association, the eastern border of which is Foxhall Road, has voted to support the school's application in return for a ban on left turns at the proposed school entrance. But does a ban on left turns solve anything or does it just redirect the problem to the north bound Foxhall lane.

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Exhibit No. 91

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EXHIBIT NO.91

getting them into the allowable northbound lane by turning into one of the streets south of the site and then turning around? And what about those living on the streets north of the Cafritz property who can look forward to accommodating the traffic trying to leave the school but still head downtown. Their streets too will be used to construct shortcuts. Instead of two turns per car there will be six.

Furthermore, redirecting the traffic onto the side streets creates a major issue of safety on these neighborhood streets. The roadways are appropriately sized to accommodate local residential traffic. Sidewalks are few and far between. Residents walk to the local stores with children and dogs in tow in the streets. It is very much a peaceable kingdom. With the advent of commuters, often speeding to deliver their children to school and get to work, we are concerned that they will become road-kill. Secondly, Foxhall Road, in the vicinity of the proposed Field School location, is a single winding and steeply sloped lane of commuter traffic. Fatalities are not an uncommon occurrence on Foxhall between Whitehaven Street and Loughboro Road. We shutter to think how the statistics will rise with the onset of more commuter traffic and student drivers.

The community does not have the burden of solving the traffic problem, the applicant does. Anyone who travels in either direction on Foxhall during the morning rush knows full well that Mr. Slade is simply wrong in concluding that the existing public street system can accommodate this additional traffic "without adverse impact." There are at least eight other schools within a one half mile radius of the Cafritz property, and we still haven't experienced the impact of the traffic that the expansions of St. Patricks or George Washington University/Mount Vernon will bring. The community must not be stampeded nor should those who raise the traffic issue be dismissed as "just being against the school." The school owes us a solution, and BZA should insist we get it before this is approved.

Sincerely,



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cc: Ms. Kathy Patterson
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