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October 17, 2000

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20001

Re: **Application number 16622**, Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc., increasing to 15 residents

Dear Board:

We are writing to **protest** the above application to increase the total number of residents to 15. Joelle and I live at 1016 F Street NE. This is directly across F Street from the applicant. We have lived here for 4 years and recently bought the property.

There are several reasons why we protest this increase. We have witnessed many incidents of rocks being thrown at houses and vehicles. This began following the delivery of white rocks last summer used to landscape some of the outside areas. The residents sitting outside with nothing to do, decided to throw rocks. Our car has 2 dents from such activity. One of our neighbors, Lewie Coleman, who manages an apartment building at 1100 F Street NE, has seen the same thing repeatedly.

There have been several incidents of profanity directed at people walking on the sidewalk next to 1022 Maryland Avenue NE. I have been the target of 2 such attacks. My next door neighbor, Teresa Thompson, has been called a "bitch" and others have frequently been treated to such language.

Each time that I was accosted, I spoke with the person in charge at Sasha Bruce. They responded very well to my complaint. I have also mentioned the problem of trash. I have met and talked to the Director, George. He listened and has improved the situation. I like him, but I am worried.

There have been outbursts of anger from residents. A resident simply loses control and starts cursing very loud. Usually the person is restrained and police arrive. Sometimes the resident is removed. I guess some level of this behavior is to be expected, but it certainly doesn't make me feel peaceful or relaxed. It robs one of the right to quiet enjoyment their home.

The trash area has been a big problem for a long time. People who don't even live on the block, complain that it "looks like a third world country". Trash bags are thrown over a cinder block wall hopefully into a receptacle. Of course frequently the receptacle is missed. The bag breaks on the cement floor spilling the contents. And it remains there, attracting rats. Residents seem to have an attitude that the trash area is off limits. So it does not get cleaned up very often except when BFI collects it.

BZA
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Exhibit No. 28

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EXHIBIT NO.28

This morning at 6:30 a male resident started tossing large pieces of wood and metal into the trash area while standing near the north steps. This is a distance of approximately 20 feet. He seemed to pretend to shoot basketball. None of this trash made it to a container and the noise was enough to awake us from deep sleep. After we were awakened we witnessed the young man throw a piece of wood with such force that it sent a dumpster flying out of the trash area onto the sidewalk making a huge clatter. At that point , we asked through our open bedroom window that he not make so much noise. He acted like he had no idea what the problem was. If the young man had been supervised while he was "cleaning up" maybe the trash would have been made it into the dumpster without disturbing the neighborhood out of sleep at 6:30 in the morning.

This afternoon, when Joelle arrived home, there were 3 police cruisers across from our house. A female resident was on the ground, face down, handcuffed in the driveway of 1022 Maryland Avenue NE. Obviously there had been another problem.

During the last 4 to 6 weeks there has been an army of people working to improve the appearance of the house. The north side has been completely landscaped. The destroyed basketball hoops have been replaced. Trash has been removed. The place looks more like a Christian summer camp than a half way house, but I am still worried. Is this just for show or is the property really going to be maintained from now on?

Most of the time the people in charge sit at a table inside the west door making it difficult to observe resident behavior in the yard. How can they supervise from that position? And supervision is the problem. The residents need much more attention than they are getting. My understanding is that no staff will be increased to handle the new workload. Increasing the number of residents is not going to improve the situation. In fact, it is highly probable that it will worsen.

I have lived in this city since 1973, all right here on Capitol Hill. I agree with what Sasha Bruce is doing. My son attended public schools and is currently a senior at Howard University. I like living here, but I am very concerned.

For these reasons, we oppose the request to increase the number of residents at 1022 Maryland Avenue NE, Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.

Sincerely,

Tim Gunter Joelle K Buchanan

Tim Gunter and Joelle Buchanan