Joshua B. Halpern
515 Tenth Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
00 MAY 30 P8:20

Board of Zoning Adjustment
Government of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Application Number 16622 Application of Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.

To the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I hope that you receive this letter in time for your meeting. I have received a copy of the letter Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc sent to Ms. Reid November 17. I also attended part of the open house referred to in that letter, and talked briefly with Ms. Shore at that time and earlier this week. I have also talked with several of my neighbors about the matter.

The actions taken by Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc. in the last three weeks have improved the situation.

1. Erecting the fencing has helped with the issues of privacy and noise in the backyards of the square bounded by Maryland Avenue, F Street and 10th and 11th Streets, NE.
2. The increased number of trash pickups and attention to trash in the area has improved sanitation.

Many people came to the November 19, 2000 open house at Sasha Bruce. I was only able to be there part of the time because I first heard of the meeting that day, after I had returned to DC on an overnight flight. My observations and reports that I have from others indicate to me that this was a substantive meeting.

First, I understand that several people volunteered their time to help at the shelter. Ms. Shore tells me that these people and others have agreed to serve on a local liaison committee. I have also agreed to be a member of this committee.

Second, several neighbors at the meeting described unpleasant experiences with the shelter and the youth housed there. These problems were similar to those discussed in the BZA hearing and in the letters you have received from other members of the community. A major difficulty has been the refusal of Sasha Bruce Youthworks to acknowledge the problems that the shelter has imposed on the community and their insistence that the community had not complained before. On the other hand, I and others who have written to you, while objecting to an increase in the number of shelter beds from 10 to 15, agreed that the shelter should continue to exist at its present level because of the recognized need which it serves. This asymmetry made the proceedings far more adversarial than they should have been.

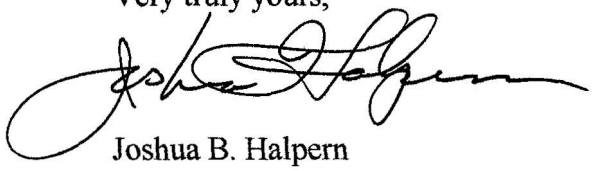
BZA
Case No. 16622
Exhibit No. 44
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16622
EXHIBIT NO.44

Our objections, (here I include those raised in the letters that you have received from others) were against increasing the burden on the community. Sasha Buce Youthworks has appeared unable to operate the Maryland Avenue shelter in a way which did not burden its neighbors even with a limit of 10. After the November 19th open house Sasha Bruce Youthworks must know that many neighbors are not pleased with their previous operation of the shelter, nor should they doubt that the same neighbors support their goals and would strongly support the shelter if it were better run.

The November 19th open house was the beginning of a dialogue, not the end of a process. Sasha Bruce Youthworks and the neighborhood need a period of time to work through this process, time for mutual trust to build, and time to see how the initiatives which have begun, will develop. Your immediate approval of the application would short circuit this dialogue. Immediate BZA approval would remove the necessity of Sasha Bruce working with its neighbors. I would ask you to delay approval for a period of six months pending only a report from the liaison committee at that time.

Thank you for your consideration, I remain

Very truly yours,



Joshua B. Halpern