Stephen H. Kline

1309 Kenyon Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2305
(202) 232-2537
shkline@bellatlantic.net

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March 20, 2001

Jerrily R. Kress
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application Number 16650

Dear Ms. Kress:

I am writing this letter to oppose the application by the Southwest Church of Christ for a zoning adjustment granting a waiver "to establish a Community Service Center for a community residential facility to support individuals and their families in an R-4 District at premises 1305-1307 Irving Street, NW".

My reasons for opposing the zoning adjustment and waiver pertain to the number of type of such facilities already in existence in Ward One and in particular, Columbia Heights. Ward One has more such facilities than any other ward. Columbia Heights has a large number of such facilities already, many of them not in compliance with current zoning regulations. Within 500 feet of the proposed two-house facility, there exist two half-way houses for post-release inmates, two facilities for treating substance abusers, and two facilities for housing youthful offenders on probation. Within two blocks, there exist additional facilities similar to the one sought by the creation of the zoning adjustment and waiver. Moreover, the proposed facility duplicates services provided by several other facilities in the immediate neighborhood. Finally, within 200 feet of this proposed facility, there exists a known drug dealing house.

While we in Columbia Heights have generously extended ourselves to operators of CBRFs in the past, we are no longer eager to accommodate the increasing numbers of them. In order to preserve the qualities that make Columbia Heights attractive to homeowners, it is essential to maintain the neighborhood as a residential one. Too many commercial establishments catering to the needs of specialized groups change the character of the neighborhood from residential to institutional. This is something that current and future homeowners do not want.

There are a number of additional factors to be considered when examining this application. The general condition of the two properties, and a third adjacent property that is owned by the Church, is not good. The buildings are in need of repairs, painting and general upkeep. Another issue that is of concern is the paint peeling from the exterior of the houses. A determination needs to be made whether it is lead-based paint or not.

Security at these buildings has not been good in the past. Last year before it was closed, a person was raped inside the building. In addition, the Church lacks experience in managing this kind of facility. Currently the Church is engaged with another organization in the renovation of several scattered site properties. It is fair to question the Church's ability to maintain firm control of so many different projects and to see that they are well operated. The fact that such a facility might be placed directly across the street from several of the scattered site properties will act as a deterrent in placing these properties into qualified owner hands.

BZA
Case No. 16650
Exhibit No. 33

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16650
EXHIBIT NO.33

From time to time in the past, members of the community have asked the Church to allow use of its facility for community events. The Church has not cooperated and has shown little interest in the community at large. Most of its parishioners are from Maryland.

When testifying before the ANC, Larry Bonner, spokesman for the Church stated clearly that it was not intended to be residential facility. The application states otherwise. My Bonner also stated that the hours of operation would be from 10am until 10pm. This is unacceptable. Young people emerging at 10pm for the facility need only walk one block north to pass right by a known drug dealing house.

I am opposed to the zoning adjustment.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen H. Kline

cc: Elizabeth McIntyre, Chair, ANC1A
Eric Heard, Commissioner, Single Member District, 1A06