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Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

April 10th, 2002

Re: BZA Application No. 16852
St. Patrick's School - 4925 MacArthur Blvd.

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

As a seven year resident of the Palisades community, and as a father of two young children (both of whom attend St. Patrick's School), I would like to give my support of the proposed use of 4925 MacArthur Boulevard by St. Patrick's.

I moved to the District partly because I believed that it would be possible for my children to get a good education in the city. At the moment, given the state of the DC public schools, I believe that this means that they have to go to private schools. There is a critical need for middle school options in the District of Columbia, and St. Patrick's is trying to meet that need.

My children's experience at St. Patrick's has been very good, and I am grateful to them for that. The management and teachers of the school, from the principal, Peter Barrett on down through all the teachers that have been involved with my children, have shown a strong and principled commitment to providing good education and a caring environment for the students. I think my feeling is shared by all of the parents I know who sent their children there. Many of these parents have made significant financial sacrifices, as well as contributions of their time, to be involved with, and contribute to, the school.

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It is largely because of this strong regard that I have for the management of the school, and their commitment to the education of their students, that I support their current plan for a middle school on MacArthur. Some of the objections to the site for being too small, inappropriate design, etc. are somewhat valid. I know the management of the school is aware of these problems, and I know that if a better solution could have been found they would have been the first to enact it. There are, unfortunately, no perfect solutions, so we (you) have to choose between the concerns of the neighbors, and the needs of parents and children. I think it is a clear choice here.

Given that I live about four blocks away from the proposed location, I am extremely sympathetic to the concerns of the immediate neighbors of the property. However, as a former New Yorker, and one who likes that city very much, I also know that people can live together, in very small areas, and that this actually can turn out to be a good thing for all involved. As we look towards the future, where hopefully Washington becomes once again a successful city,

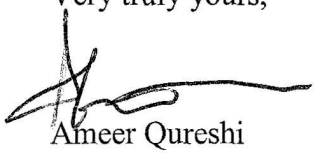
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where people prefer to live instead of the suburbs, we will have to deal with more people in the city, the need for more schools, and more problems of this type. These are in some ways good problems - problems of a successful city.

The real possible impact on neighbors is noise. But kids are only going to be at the property in the daytime, when most people are at work, so the actual impact of any additional noise is mostly going to be unnoticeable. As for additional traffic let's get real. The property is on a highly trafficked major artery-MacArthur. The traffic impact will be inconsequential. St Patrick's is willing to agree to highly restricted use of the site including a shuttle bus drop off arrangement, as well as a severe restriction on any night or weekend activity. The current use of the property involves numerous night meetings monthly which result in parking congestion on Ashby Street. So I really believe that this is a case where there will be a small inconvenience for a few, and realistically it would only be felt by the one immediate neighbor next to the property (if they are at home on a workday) because the noise from the kids will not bad (at worst) across the street or two houses or more removed. On the other hand there would be a great benefit for 60 kids every single school day.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this application, and I urge you to approve St. Patrick's application.

Very truly yours,



Ameer Qureshi