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April 11, 2002

Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Room 210 South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Application of St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School (#16852)

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

I am pleased to offer my strong support of the application of St. Patrick's School to use the existing building at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard for its middle school. I am a resident of the District of Columbia. I currently live in Georgetown near the proposed site, and will be moving even closer to the site at the end of the month (when we are re-locating to Spring Valley). I support the enhancement of educational opportunities for middle school students in the District. Having quality education options is an important way to enhance livability in the District, and to attract families to live here.

My children have been attending St. Patrick's for nearly a decade. St. Patrick's is a particularly warm and friendly community of teachers, administrators, children and parents. It is the quintessential "family oriented" organization. I have read some negative articles in the neighborhood press that strike me as wrong and terribly unfair. The St. Patrick's community, and its leadership, could not be more fair and considerate of others. I have been involved as an officer and board member of a neighborhood citizens association – for Georgetown – and I respect local interests; however, I am confident that the St. Patrick's application does not realistically threaten any local interests.

The proposed use of the property as a school is perfectly reasonable within the local context. I am familiar with the location, traffic patterns, and specific property that is the subject of the application. I understand that it has been used for non-residential purposes for over 40 years. I believe that the proposed middle school use will benefit the neighborhood more than the existing use by the Washington Psychoanalytic Society. I also believe that reasonable operating conditions can eliminate or mitigate any potential adverse impacts on the neighborhood. For example, I understand that the school has proposed a shuttle drop-off arrangement that will greatly limit any traffic on Ashby Street. I cannot imagine that the noise associated with 60 middle school students could have an adverse impact on this neighborhood. The site is located on a bus route and is also affected by the National Airport flight pattern. The proposed use thus seems both reasonable and appropriate.

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 169

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.169

Finally, while neighborhood associations and neighboring property owners should strive to protect and promote special, local interests, I believe care must be taken not to be unduly restrictive. In general, individuals and institutions should be allowed to make their own decisions provided that those decisions do not unreasonably impinge on other legitimate interests. St. Patrick's proposal is hardly unreasonable. Here, the neighbors have voted in favor of St. Patrick's application, while the ANC did not. I hope the Board will agree with the local citizens association, and exercise its power in a reasonable manner.

The City of Washington benefits by continuing to allow strong, positive institutions like St. Patrick's to grow and prosper without undue restrictions.

Thank you for considering my views.

Very truly yours,

Alan Charles Raul