Friends of Hardy, Inc. 4503 MacArthur Blvd. NW, Washington, DC 20007 202 337-6608

March 11, 2002

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

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2002 MAR 12 AM 10:58

Attention: Mr. Richard Nero

Dear Mr. Nero:

Following the criteria set up in Title 11 DCMR, "Zoning," paragraph 3106.2, Friends of Hardy, Inc. requests party status in the BZA hearing about 16855, Modification of Approved Order No. 16424, the request of Rock Creek International School (RCIS) -- a private school -- to expand to the sixth grade.

Re: What does Friends of Hardy represent?

Friends of Hardy, Inc. (FOH) is incorporated in the District as a 501-C3 non-profit organization. Our chartered purpose is to make the Hardy Recreation Center a hub of recreational activities for the residents of our neighborhood. Secondarily, we also work with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DCDPR) to monitor the use of the field by organizations with permits.

We believe that public spaces should first serve the tax paying residents of our neighborhood. We have a diverse membership of residents of the Foxhall-Palisades community. We operate entirely with volunteers who live here and who have an intense desire to protect and improve our public facilities.

We see ourselves as a corporate party of interest, and if we receive party status from the BZA, we will appear as an opponent to the request. As chairperson of the steering committee, I will present our testimony.

Re: 3106.2, (e, 1, 2, 3). Our interest in the property.

The Hardy Recreation Center adjoins the property leased by the school, located at the corner of Foxhall Road and Q Street, N.W. The school leases the land through the DCDPR Office of Property Management, and its use is controlled by the zoning order. RCIS has a permit to use the public facilities for physical recreation classes and recess during the school day and for their after school program. (They have one small play area for preschoolers on their own land.)

The Hardy facilities include fenced lots with play equipment for tots and older kids, a sprinkler area, and the playing fields. An unusual advantage for playgrounds are the large trees that shade our climbers, swings, slides, sand box, and leisure benches. We have enhanced these areas with plantings and gardens. The fields provide open space for soccer, football, kite flying, and dogs. These facilities are the total interest and focus of FOH: we raise money, contribute time, labor and unreimbursed expenses to improve them and to support programs.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 16855
EXHIBIT NO. 36

BZA
Case No. 16855
Exhibit No. 36

Since our founding in 1997, we have secured grants, raised nearly $30,000 for new equipment for both the play lots, and worked closely with DCDPR on the renovation of Hardy Field, which has cost more than $90,000 of taxpayers' money. We have paid for and maintained the fence that protects the field from use during a year-long period to establish the new turf. We have paid for program materials and in some cases paid for instructors.

Re: 3106.2 (e, 4) Impact of the RCIS request on the center.

- The demographics of our neighborhood are changing. More and more families with young children are moving in, increasing demand for recreation on the play lots for toddlers through preschoolers. High usage times are 10:00 to 1:00 and 3:00 to 5:00, bracketing typical nap times.

- The impact of RCIS' after school program for first through fifth graders is already a problem from about 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. when they have free play on the center grounds. The older children dominate the space and equipment so that many younger kids from the neighborhood are afraid to use it.

  Head of RCIS Daniel Hollinger has stated publicly that they will increase enrollments from the current 175 to the BZA cap of 200 whether or not the sixth grade is approved. That increase will exacerbate the problem we now have within the current zoning, so we are already seeing private school use taking precedence over public use. If a zoning modification allows RCIS to expand to sixth grade on site, there will be even older kids in the play areas after school, increasing a problem that already vexes the neighborhood.

- While Mr. Hollinger professes to want good community relations and open communication, he has regularly hidden from us his efforts to buy the property and to secure trailers for classroom expansion. We got that information only through a Freedom of Information Act request. Fortunately, he succeeded in neither of these efforts, but the result has been a serious erosion of trust.

- As a consequence, we now do not believe his statements that he wants no more than a year of sixth grade on site and suspect we are at the top of a slippery slope of school expansion that will impede public use of the center even more. The expansion of other private schools, including two universities, within walking distance of Hardy makes us even more wary of private school creep.

There is much evidence to support our position that RCIS should be held to its current cap on preschool through fifth grade. I hope this letter is sufficient to justify the granting of our request to be a party of interest in this matter and present testimony as such.

Yours truly,

Frank Staroba, chair
FOH Steering Committee

FACSIMILE COVER PAGE

To :	**Richard Nero**	**From :**	Frank Staroba
Sent :	3/12/2002 at 10:54:12 AM	**Pages :**	3 (including Cover)
Subject :	Request for party status		

Mr. Nero:

Here is the Friends of Hardy request for party status.

If you need a signed hard copy, I can mail it to you. Please let me know.

Frank Staroba

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