#16855

March 25, 2002

Good ~~Morning~~ afternoon. My name is Linda Brackett. I live one block away from Hardy School, which is now leased by the Rock Creek International School. I am a member of the Hardy Neighborhood Recreational Advisory Council and Chair of the Hardy Garden Club as well as a volunteer at the Hardy Recreation Center. My concerns are related to ~~the~~ abuse of the public recreational facilities by the Rock Creek International School, which would be intensified by the addition of a sixth grade, no matter how small.

Rock Creek International School was granted a variance by the Board in 1999, enabling it to operate a school with pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, under conditions spelled out by the Board's Summary Order. The variance and the conditions were acceptable to the community and to the school at the time, even though the Board members were skeptical about the fact that the school had no play space, and would have to rely on the adjacent Hardy Recreation facilities for all of its outdoor activities. Because the Board had questions about the lack of play space, it included in its Summary Order the demand that the School appear for a hearing again in 2009 to review its status and prevent an automatic renewal of the lease.

In its two and a half years of operation here, Rock Creek has not been a good neighbor, has not worked towards resolution of problems through its quarterly meetings with the community, and has used the Hardy Recreational facilities as though it owned them. Increasingly the public is denied access to the facilities because of the school's usurping the play equipment, the open space, the pedestrian area, the basketball court, and the spray area. Examples:

1. Stickball on the tennis court.
2. Full court basketball games at 4:00 in the afternoon at the expense of players who come from the neighborhood and elsewhere in the city to play pickup games or practice shooting baskets.
3. Leaving goals, cones, and flags on the field instead of removing them so that others could pursue their own activities.
4. Regularly destroying the borders and plants in the vegetable and flower gardens.
5. Disruption of Recreation Center activities such as the Babies and Toddler Program and the T'ai Chi classes by running through

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the area where they are being conducted..

6. Running and throwing balls in the pedestrian area beside the Field House at the expense of walkers and senior citizens who enjoy sitting on the benches there.
7. Climbing on the new fencing around the basketball court and damaging it.
8. Intimidation of smaller community children who want to play on the equipment.

This tax exempt school is completely dependent upon public, tax supported facilities for its outdoor activities for grades 1 - 5. It has not complied with DC Parks and Recreation policies regarding permits. The children are not properly supervised. The school has not cooperated with the Recreation Center staff and volunteers. Rather than exacerbate these problems by allowing the school to add a sixth grade, I am requesting that the Board order the school to submit a schedule of activities for each semester (both for school hours and after school hours) to the Recreation Center staff, and then abide by the staff's decision regarding appropriate use of its facilities.

Thank you,

Linda Brackett