5030 Garfield Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016

August 27, 2002

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

BZA
Case No. 16915
Exhibit No. 55

Re: BZA Application 16915
Barbara Schiever Allan—2828 Hurst Terrace, NW

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

I urge you to deny the above application for renewal of the Special Exception to operate a child development center at 2828 Hurst Terrace, NW.

While the center, Barbara's Montessori School, is an excellent pre-school and provides a valuable service to children in our area, I and other neighbors on this block believe it is an inappropriate commercial use of a home in an R-1 residential zone. The center could and should continue its operation in another less dense and congested location.

This is not just another case of NIMBY—it is a case of our "backyard" already being overcrowded with an increasingly dense mass of large houses, shops and restaurants, and a public elementary school which has recently nearly doubled its footprint and enrollment.

This area is absorbing an overwhelming number of school expansions (Key, St. Patrick's, GDS, Lab, Field, GWU at Mt. Vernon), and is experiencing substantial numbers of major home additions and infill of vacant lots, which have resulted in increasing traffic and parking congestion. We've also seen a rise in the number of home-based businesses in our area, meaning that people who were previously gone from the neighborhood during the day are now at home during the hours that the Montessori School operates. And we've noticed an increase in traffic cutting through Hurst Terrace to avoid congestion at the nearby crowded intersection of Arizona Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard, or to avoid getting caught in the speed traps on Arizona Avenue. In short, this area is already badly congested, and the school makes the situation that much worse.

The school itself has made a number of changes since its inception that exacerbate traffic and parking problems: enrollment has increased from about 8 students to 23 each day, and the number of children walking to school has decreased to about 20-25% from a large majority at the inception. And now there are plans to sell the home and school business at 2828 Hurst Terrace to a

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new owner, and continue its operation in perpetuity. Early BZA orders expressly limited the Special Exception to the current owner, and neighbors understood the school would cease when Barbara Allan chose to retire. Many neighbors have tolerated difficult conditions for some time, knowing that eventually the school would close. But now no relief is in sight

While the school has made admirable efforts to address the traffic and parking problems it generates, it unfortunately has not fully succeeded. Sufficient off-street parking is simply not available, and it's unrealistic to believe that all parents/caregivers will always comply with even the most stringent traffic plan that could be developed.

Given these conditions, I would suggest a compromise which would accommodate both the school and its neighbors. The BZA could approve a one or two-year extension of the school's Special Exception, allowing the children who are currently enrolled for the 2002-2003 school year (and perhaps for the following school year as well) to complete their experience without disruption. In that "transition" period, the school could locate and make any needed alterations to a new facility in a less dense and congested area. We understand the school is fully enrolled with a long waiting list, and would anticipate such a move would be economically feasible.

Thank you for your attention and concern.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Leonard

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