BY FAX

4911 ASHBY STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

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September 18, 2002

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chairman
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 20001

BZA
Case No. 16915
Exhibit No. 90

RE: BZA Order 16815

Dear Chairman Griffis:

I write in support of the neighbors living adjacent to and near the child development center operated by Barbara Allen at 2828 Hurst Terrace, NW. Ms. Allen is operating one of many schools in the Palisades area and the neighbors have expressed concern about the amount of daily traffic generated by cars transporting children to and from Ms. Allen's school. I hesitate to call this a child development center because the check submitted to the Office of Zoning and Ms. Allen's letterhead clearly read, "Barbara's Montessori School, Inc." Also, I am not aware of another child development center in Ward 3 with such a large number of children located in a single family residence.

In early spring, 2001, Barbara Allen approached me as coordinator for the Partnerships for Problem Solving, a community outreach program of the Metropolitan Police Department to train police officers, agency representatives and community volunteers in collaborative methods for neighborhood problem solving. (I also serve as chair of the Palisades Traffic Committee.) She was concerned about the traffic congestion being generated by Key Elementary School which is located across the street from her Montessori School. Representatives of Key School, Ms. Allen, neighbors, the police and I met and subsequently a traffic plan was developed by the PTA of Key School to mitigate the alleged congestion. Starting in September of 2001, Key School, under the supervision and direction of a 2nd District Police officer, began to implement their traffic plan which helped improve Key School traffic. It is important to note that the opposite side of the school, or Eskridge Terrace side, was under construction throughout the 2001 school year.

In September 2002, Key School traffic was removed from Hurst Terrace and moved onto Eskridge Terrace, the site of the new entrance to the school. Key school has gone to great lengths to help mitigate the impact of school construction as well as their parent-generated traffic for the safety of the Key school students, parents, employees and neighbors, but other factors

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affecting traffic remain. Neighborhood streets provide a shortcut for traffic seeking to avoid the intersection of MacArthur and Arizona as well as parking for the commercial businesses that line MacArthur Boulevard one block away from the school. As a result three members of the PTA met with representatives of DDOT and me last week to request further traffic signs, crosswalks and other safety measures around Key School.

At the beginning I stated that this letter is written in support of the neighbors living adjacent to and near Barbara's Montessori School. It is now clear that school traffic congestion on Hurst Terrace is a result of Barbara's Montessori School, not Key School, as Ms. Allen alleged in 2001. Back ups that prevent residents from getting in or out of their homes occur every morning and every afternoon. The driveway to Ms. Allen's home is used by her students and requires Ms. Allen and her teachers to use on-street parking. Ms. Allen has not presented a traffic plan for the school, however, this year parents have been directed to circle the block if traffic begins to back up, but this impacts more neighborhood streets and more residents. The length of time it takes to get children in and out of car seats is not without consequence to neighbors whose driveways and street access are blocked while the queue inches forward or school traffic circles in front of their homes.

When Application 16815 comes before the BZA on September 24th, I ask the board to carefully consider concerns expressed by the neighbors of Ms. Allen's school. I also ask that you consider that the number of students actually registered at the school and the number of children reported on the application are not the same. Obviously, the number of students has grown over time and so has traffic generated by the school, but it should not be the neighbors who sacrifice their quality of life for Barbara Allen's gain.

Sincerely,

Alma H. Gates

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