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Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chairman
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W., Second Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 16970 - The National Child Research Center

Dear Mr. Griffis,

I read the community comments from both sides of this issue, I am increasingly surprised that the opposition to NCRC cannot find a common ground on which to strike a compromise. I don't have children attending NCRC, (but we do enjoy use of their playground after hours), and I don't live east of 34th street, (but I do live on the Porter Street autobahn and am extremely sensitive to local traffic issues). As a Cleveland Park resident wanting to bridge this growing chasm in our neighborhood, I have tried to weigh both sides of the issue, the actions of the parties, and attempted to determine what is "reasonable". I am a member of the Friends of NCRC and I am writing this letter to evidence my total and unequivocal support for NCRC's application to the D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment, BZA Application No. 16970.

It's understandable that a school would want to increase it's enrollment to find the right balance of class size, teacher ratios and diversity. It's equally understandable that the local neighborhood would want to prevent a situation of a school growing to infinity burdening the neighborhood. After listening to the neighborhood's concerns, NCRC scaled back their plans, limited growth to 10 students, and agreed to cap enrollment at that number. NCRC's actions strike me as completely reasonable.

It's understandable that after 75 years a school would want to increase their interior space to offer more multifunction rooms. It's equally understandable that the local neighborhood would want to have input into the size and scale of the addition and keep it in accordance with CP historic standards. After listening to neighborhood concerns, NCRC scaled back their addition, sunk a lot of it underground, and made modifications to preserve as much of their open space as possible. Again, NCRC's actions strike me as completely reasonable.

It's understandable that the local neighborhood would have strong concerns about local traffic issues, and I suspect herein lies the real rub. But it is also the vast gray area where a compromise can take shape. After listening to the neighborhood's concerns, NCRC has proposed to include a provision in its enrollment contract that the family agrees to abide by the terms and conditions on the "Traffic Management Plan". That sounds reasonable.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 158

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.158

What if the opposition could take the intense energy spent on waging war and re-channel it into brainstorming for a solution of substance? What if a certain number of the enrollment had to come from the local neighborhood or Ward 3? What if a high percentage of the enrollment had to carpool? What if a certain number of the enrollment had to drop off on the Ordway side and a certain number on the Highland Place side? What if the parents faced stiff fines if they did not adhere to the Traffic Management Plan? What if NCRC hired two traffic cops (bonuses paid for by the stiff fines) to enforce the Traffic Management Plan and busted each car that blocked driveways, double parked, etc. What if each class had a slightly staggered pick up and drop off time? What if parents who brought their kids in Mini Coopers received a tuition rebate and those that used SUVs an additional assessment? What if?

I am increasingly uncomfortable with the opposition's apparent position of, "not one new brick, not one more child, not one more car." That rigid stance strikes me as completely unreasonable. I support NCRC's efforts to be a good neighbor, and hope that the parties can somehow remove themselves from the heat of the battle and focus on finding solutions. Peaceful coexistence is a victory in itself.

Sincerely,

Danna McCormick