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16970

Geoffrey Griffis
Chairman, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001

cc: Colleen Smith, DOT
Mayor Tony Williams
Council Member Kathy Patterson
ANC Commissioner Nancy Macwood, ANC 3C09

Dear Geoffrey Griffis:

I write to express my opposition to the DOT's proposal that Highland Place, N.W. might be made a one-way street. I live on Newark Street between Highland Place and 33rd Place, and I believe that making Highland Place one-way from Newark to 33rd may simply shift the impact of NCRC traffic from the street in front of the school, to 33rd Place and to Newark Street. Moreover, I am deeply uneasy with the idea of making a public street one-way to accommodate the changing activities of a private business serving a limited clientele.

As Colleen Smith at the DOT very helpfully explained to me, DOT has submitted to the BZA four options for addressing traffic and safety concerns on Highland Place. I dislike the idea of taking away public parking spaces on Highland Place to accommodate NCRC's impact on the neighborhood, and I dislike even more the idea of making Highland one-way. The District of Columbia only very rarely designates a street as one-way, and the extraordinary nature of this suggestion may show that narrow, winding Highland Place has already reached the limits of its uniquely restricted capacity. The neighborhood deserves a fairer, more creative plan for managing traffic, one in which NCRC can also make a contribution to mitigating the impact of their own traffic. And if NCRC's traffic cannot be handled without placing new limits on the use of public streets, perhaps a cap on NCRC's enrollment, either self-imposed or imposed by the BZA, is indeed the solution.

Alternatively, NCRC and the BZA and DOT could reach farther for more creative solutions to the traffic jams on Highland Place. Shifting more of NCRC's pickup and drop-off traffic to the Ordway Street side of the property seems like a good place to start. With Ordway scheduled for rebuilding next year, this is the perfect opportunity for NCRC to dedicate a semicircular piece of its own property along Ordway Street to a new driveway to handle its own pickup/drop-off traffic, or even, perhaps, to create a new driveway entrance on Ordway, with a driveway that would connect through to a driveway entrance on Highland Place. A connecting driveway through the NCRC property could

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be gated and fenced to allow dual use as a paved playground, and then as a driveway, at different times of day. This would probably mean the permanent loss of parking spaces on Ordway Street, something Ordway residents will surely dislike, but it would at least spread NCRC's impact more evenly among its neighbors.

Of course, it would be great to take a portion of that impact out of the immediate neighborhood entirely. I imagine NCRC is unenthusiastic about running a shuttle bus, but don't other children of NCRC age, at least the older ones, ride buses to and from school? The buildings, grounds, driveways and parking lots of the National Cathedral suggest themselves as an obvious nearby and safe place for the older NCRC students to be picked up and dropped off.

I am sure that NCRC and the city can think of other creative ways to disperse the impact NCRC's growth is having on streets that were not designed to handle concentrated masses of motorized traffic.

Whatever your decision, please don't make Highland Place one-way. It simply would not be fair to restrict use of this public roadway to meet the needs of a private business, and the neighborhood's narrow streets would still be called on to absorb the concentrated impact of traffic that will always appear all at once, at certain times of each school day. And if all parties are willing to compromise and think creatively, making Highland Place one-way isn't necessary, either.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours Truly,

David S. Hammond

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