Andrew Aurbach BZA Testimony (to be read by Greg Weingast)

I believe that NCRC, which has been an important institution in the neighborhood for over 70 years, requires this expansion in order to best serve its mission, the children of the neighborhood and the children of the region for the years to come. Indeed, many of those in opposition have already had the opportunity to take advantage of the quality pre-school learning that takes place at NCRC, and I believe that this opportunity should remain viable for future generations to enjoy.

I live and work across the street from the school on Ordway Street, and am able to witness the staff management of the traffic every morning. As this seems to be the primary concern of the opposition, I can testify that based on my first-hand observations it is clear that the school takes great care to ensure as safe and orderly drop off and pick-up as possible during each period. The current situation, while not perfect, does not bother me because 1) it is simply well within what I would consider to be acceptable, 2) it is a school that has been here a lot longer than I have, and 3) I chose to live here. Indeed, improved signage and traffic calming measures, as well as improved curbing and sidewalks, which I understand may be part of a planned 2004 Ordway Street renovation will help tremendously. Living in the heart of Washington, D.C., the Cleveland Park neighborhood experiences Uptown Theater and restaurant traffic, Metro parking and similar aspects of urban living. However, I would take any of those "consequences" over the alternatives of commuting from the suburbs, or living elsewhere. I suspect that most Cleveland Park residents chose to live in the neighborhood understanding these conditions.

BZA
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Exhibit No. 240

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Over the past two years, I have attended several community meetings at NCRC. I believe the school has made a compelling case for their need to change. It is clear that this proposed expansion will enable them to meet cutting edge practices for pre-school education. If they cannot accommodate the facility to meet modern 21st century educational standards, the school will suffer.

I hope that future Cleveland Parkers and city residents don't pine for the day a quality nursery school resides in the neighborhood, because NCRC won't be viable in the long term without these improvements.

My son, who is nearly 2, attends a daycare facility that goes through pre-kindergarten. That institution has the kinds of space and facility that NCRC needs. As a result, I cannot see why I would switch him from where he is to NCRC even though I have to drive him every morning and evening, rather than simply walk him across the street. I suspect that as other institutions catch up and surpass NCRC, NCRC will suffer greatly.

I firmly believe that a good community rests on its institutions. NCRC is one of those in our neighborhood, which is why I--and the great majority of people who live outside of a 200-foot radius from the school--support their efforts to improve and to continue to be a model school for the future.