TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

Thank you Mr. Chair and Board members
I am Pat Murphy Sheehy. I have been a tax paying resident of our city for 30 years, living at 2941 Newark Street, NW near Connecticut Avenue, behind the Uptown Theatre and a resident of the area since 1950. As Producing Artistic Director of Source Theatre Company, a 25 year old professional theatre on 14th Street, I have worked in the old residential Shaw community to help revitalize the once riot corridor into a safer urban neighborhood with services and cultural opportunities. As a commissioner and later Chair of the DC Commission on the Arts, I served on the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation Board and guided the Arts Commission on many projects to support neighborhood communities through the arts. I share this background with you to inform you of my long time commitment to this city.
My husband and I were early supporters of the school by allowing our home to be on one of their first fund raising house tours. We have watched it grow from a small neighborhood nursery school to a perplexingly un-neighborly institution generating significant traffic congestion. Venturing out midday, just trying to get out of my street toward Wisconsin Avenue, I often find myself behind a line of oversized SUV's that have turned onto Newark Street from NCRC. And returning from 34th street (Reno Road) back onto Newark can be even more frustrating and dangerous because these large and numerous cars are blocking the opposite direction lane.

Unlike the expansion of other schools surrounded with acres of land that have come before you, NCRC sits on a neighborhood yard on a one block street smack in the middle of a family residential setting. This is simply a matter of a small day care center which received several variances through the good will and trust of the community disregarding their agreements and becoming a major institution. NCRC has outgrown its location in both mission and population. If NCRC is determined to expand, it would be more appropriate at this time for the school to sell the house back to its original family home purpose in keeping with the residential character of the neighborhood and look for facility space where it could construct all the buildings that will house their continuous expansion.

Mayor Williams, in his inaugural address, rightly cited the necessity of addressing the center vitality of the city; our neighborhoods. Tax paying residents are this city's economic base and it is essential for the District's economic health that their neighborhood concerns be addressed. Is anyone in the government going to give redress to the citizen outcry about the impact that this 3 to 4 story building and institutional expansion will have on the visual integrity and the residential character of this area? As a tax paying citizen, I am hoping you as the Board of Zoning Adjustment will have the courage to deal with the central issue here and address the catastrophic and irreversible impact of a yard on a street of family homes being filled with institutional buildings and increased traffic congestion.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

PAT MURPHY SHEEHY
2941 NEWARK ST. NW
WASHINGTON, DC

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 279

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.279