Cleveland Park Citizens Association

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW #2108
Washington, D 20001

Re: Case #16970

Testimony of George Idelson, President, Cleveland Park Citizens Association

The National Child Research Center. From the name you might expect a cluster of buildings sprawled on a campus on Rockville Pike. Perhaps, some day, it will achieve that ambition. For now, it is a small pre-school, nestled on a tiny cul de sac in an historic residential district in DC. There by sufferance of a special exception, it has, for many happy years, lived in a symbiotic relationship with its neighbors. You nurture our children, we nurture you.

But lately that warm neighborly relationship has soured. In part it was the increased number of students from Virginia and Maryland and the growing traffic jams they incur, and more recently, the idea of turning Highland Place into a one-way street to accommodate the traffic flow. Or the word games the school played with their enrollment figures. Or simply the deep apprehension of the neighbors that, say what you will, doubling the footprint of the school and adding still more students and staff, was an inevitable prelude to further step-by-step expansion. We're not naïve. How could it be otherwise?

For me, as president of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association, it came together on that fateful Saturday in February when the space shuttle blew apart. Our association was meeting that morning to listen to the arguments for and against the expansion. Surely the meeting would be a bust, I thought. Yet the neighbors left their TV sets to sit through several hours of debate. Instead of an empty house, almost every seat was filled. And when it came time to vote, the message was loud and clear. The citizens of Cleveland Park want you to reject this application for expansion.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 282

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.282

So I am here today to tell you, to plead with you, to listen to the community. Listen to our Council Member Kathy Patterson and At Large Member Phil Mendelson who have direct knowledge of this situation and have come to the same conclusion. Reject this application.

While the homes, the trees, the lack of sidewalks in Cleveland Park reflect the past, we are not against change. This is not Rockville Pike.

We love this school and want it to succeed. But we don't want the tail to wag the dog. In my judgment, the best way to help NCRC achieve its goals is to reject this application. Then, and perhaps only then, will the school sit down with its neighbors and work out a modus vivendi. Next to the school is the Cleveland Park Club with potentially rentable space. Perhaps giving neighborhood children, especially those who could walk to school, a clear priority in registration would ease the situation.

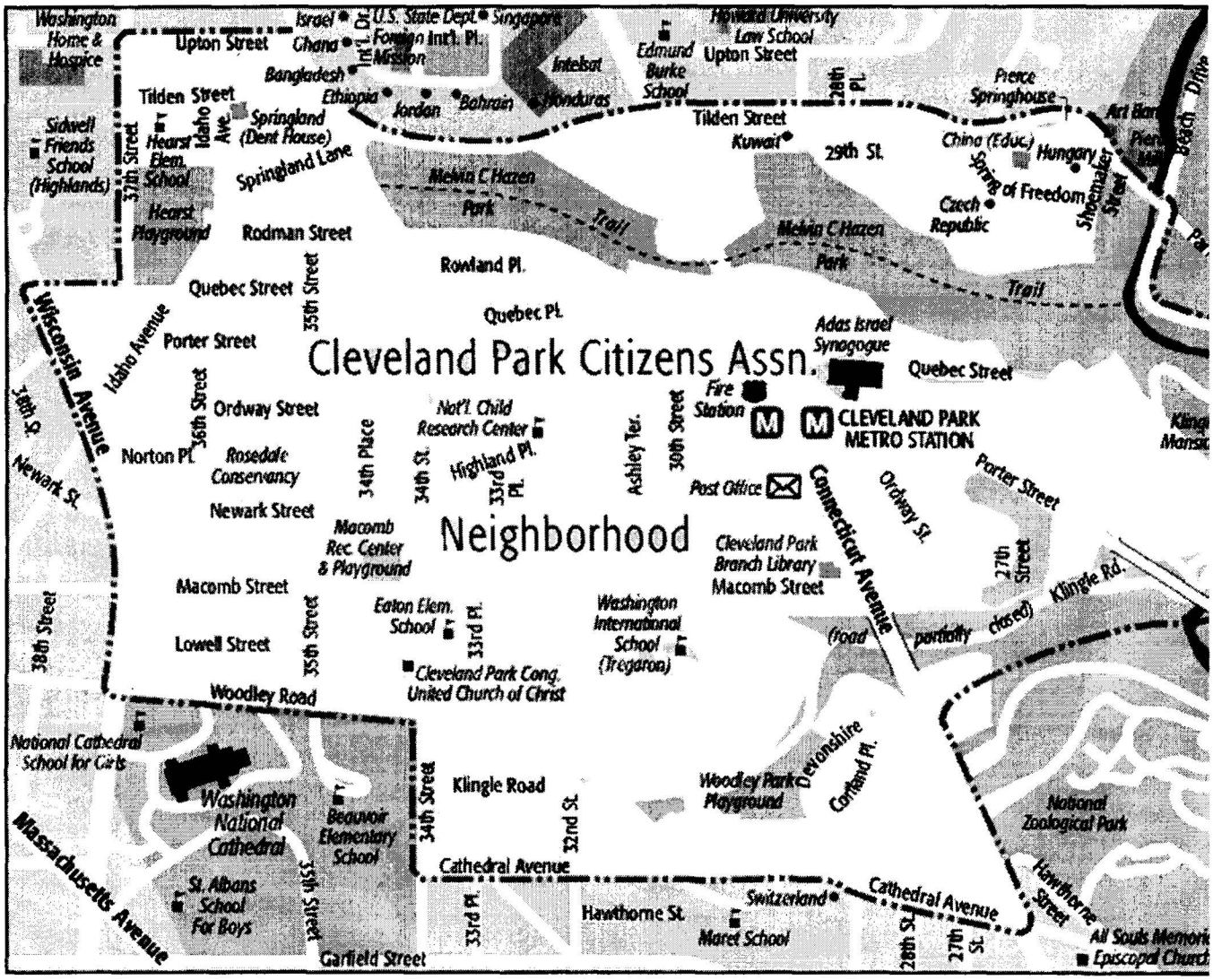
Testifying against a neighbor isn't easy for me. Saying "No" may not be easy for you. If I can do it, you can do it.

Sincerely,

George Idelson
President

Encl: CPCA Resolution Opposing NCRC Expansion

Map of CPCA territory


Cleveland Park Citizens Assn.
Neighborhood
Washington Home & Hospice
Upton Street
Israel
Ghana
Int'l Dr.
U.S. State Dept. Foreign Mission
Int'l. Pl.
Singapore
Intelsat
Howard University Law School
Edmund Burke School
Upton Street
Bangladesh
Ethiopia
Jordan
Bahrain
Honduras
Tilden Street
Springland (Dent House)
Idaho Ave.
Sidwell Friends School (Highlands)
37th Street
Hearst Elem. School
Springland Lane
Hearst Playground
Rodman Street
Melvin C Hazen Park
Trail
Rowland Pl.
Quebec Street
35th Street
Quebec Pl.
Wisconsin Avenue
Idaho Avenue
Porter Street
36th Street
Ordway Street
38th St.
Newark St.
Norton Pl.
Rosedale Conservancy
34th Place
34th St.
Highland Pl.
33rd Pl.
Ashley Ter.
30th Street
Nat'l. Child Research Center
Fire Station
Post Office
CLEVELAND PARK METRO STATION
Connecticut Avenue
Ordway St.
Porter Street
Newark Street
Macomb Rec. Center & Playground
Cleveland Park Branch Library
Macomb Street
27th Street
Klingle Rd.
38th Street
Lowell Street
35th Street
Eaton Elem. School
33rd Pl.
Washington International School (Tregaron)
(road
portion
closed)
Cleveland Park Cong. United Church of Christ
Woodley Road
National Cathedral School for Girls
Washington National Cathedral
Beauvoir Elementary School
34th Street
Klingle Road
32nd St.
Woodley Park Playground
Devonshire
Cortland Pl.
National Zoological Park
Cathedral Avenue
Massachusetts Avenue
St. Albans School For Boys
35th Street
Garfield Street
33rd Pl.
Hawthorne St.
Switzerland
Maret School
28th St.
27th St.
Hawthorne Street
All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church
Tilden Street
Kuwait
28th Pl.
Pierce Springhouse
29th St.
China (Educ.)
Hungary
Spring of Freedom
Sherrmaker Street
Czech Republic
Melvin C Hazen Park
Trail
Adas Israel Synagogue
Quebec Street

CLEVELAND PARK CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Resolution - February 1, 2003

National Child Research Center's Application for a Special Exception

WHEREAS the National Child Research Center (NCRC) has applied to the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) for a special exception which would permit it to expand its physical plant and to increase its number of children by interpreting its current special exception as allowing "120 children at any one time"; and

WHEREAS the 1998 BZA Orders granted NCRC's application for a special exception "to establish a child development center for 120 students, ages 2 1/2 to 5 years, and 28 staff"; and

WHEREAS NCRC is clearly in continuing violation of the BZA Orders by having at least 170 students and 38 staff; and

WHEREAS the Zoning Regulations (Sec. 3108) require that special exceptions "will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property," a condition that clearly is not met currently, and would be further violated by any expansion of NCRC; and

WHEREAS the Zoning Regulations (Sec. 205) have specific requirements for child development centers, including "The center shall be located and designed to create no objectionable traffic condition ...," a requirement which is clearly not met currently, and which is evidently not susceptible to relief through traffic mitigation measures or by other means; and

WHEREAS the Cleveland Park Citizens Association is and has been strongly concerned about the continuing violations of zoning orders, including special exceptions; and

WHEREAS it is particularly important that special exceptions not be easily granted nor violated with impunity, since the integrity of a residential community depends on the ability of an institution within it to function with minimal impact on the neighboring residences; therefore be it

RESOLVED that CPCA urges the BZA to recognize that NCRC is seeking to recharacterize the 1998 BZA Orders as only limiting its population to "120 children at any one time", without any limit on the enrollment, a position which is contradicted by the plain language of those Orders; and be it further

RESOLVED that for all the above reasons, the application should be denied.