OPPOSITION TO NCRC APPLICATION #16970 November 17, 2003

I ask that this document be put in the record. I testified November 4 and was only able to hand in a rough draft that day, as my printer stopped working when I tried to print the final draft. My printer is now working, so I am sending this overnight with the required 10 copies.

Thank you,

Nancy G. Harter
3028 Newark St. NW
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Hello. My name is Nancy Harter. Our house is at 3028 Newark St. I have an Early Childhood degree, a Masters in Education, and have worked with children, families and teachers all my professional life. Among the professional positions I have held over the years, I was the Director of St. Paul's Cooperative school across from Murch School for 5 years. My daughter, Alexa, went to NCRC for two years 1972-1973. I substitute taught at NCRC, and I served on their Board of Directors for four years, 1973-1977. Throughout my years in DC I have been on other youth boards and was the Interim Director of the Mental Health Coalition of DC.

From NCRC's 1928-2003 Annual Report:

Susan Piggot wrote 2002-2003 was a banner year. The school became accredited for the first time by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for "having demonstrated substantial compliance with nationally recognized criteria for high-quality early childhood programs."

They wrote in the Annual Report a goal was to keep tuition affordable.:
Tuition for a half day program is $12,000 a year with tuition and fees revenue at $1,587,497.00.
Tuition assistance is $133,300 to 23 families equaling 9% of tuition income and 13% of the student body. 171 students are enrolled.

NCRC is recognized both by accrediting boards and by many in the metropolitan area as a very good preschool. I will venture to say most of their children are then accepted by the premier private day schools in the metropolitan area.

Yet, the NCRC Strategic Plan of 2000 and the Board say, we want more. The Board has designated in their Strategic Plan to grow in student and faculty populations and build more classroom space. They have set a mission of "maintaining a good model preschool program" and finding significant funding beyond tuition. They have made a wish list disregarding the site they have in the neighborhood in which they are located, and they are ignoring safety factors of their children, their parents coming to and from school, and of all neighbors who daily during the week encounter crowded roads and unsafe situations. And, NCRC is trying, yet again, as they did in 1998 to get the District of Columbia to change their zoning and regulations to meet the school's desires.

NCRC in growing from a total morning and afternoon population of 87 students in 1977, when I was on the board, (back then NCRC was licensed for 108 a day, and which is the figure the health department now uses for them regarding the number students allowed on campus at a time) to the 171 students they have now daily ...has caused me and Cleveland Park Neighbors and others driving through the neighborhood to adapt our lives to the chaos of traffic which NCRC generates at drop off and pick up times, 5 times a day... translating to a time of about of 21/2 to 3 hours a day. There is also the after-school and weekend traffic which generates many cars and more chaos, and has already

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been mentioned in other testimony and elaborated in the video Sally Beckner showed this board.

Neighbors and I, similar to the city of the District of Columbia, have had to adapt to what NCRC has done over the years... as DC has ...changing their regulations for the school and being inconsistent (Health Board says 108 students on campus at a time but zoning allows NCRC 120 at a time - I understand that DC Health Regulations supercede Zoning so NCRC only is allowed to have 108 on campus at a time, but are striving to reach the 120 figure at a time).

Neighbors and I have had to change our daily living patterns to go to and fro from work other than the route we would have preferred to take, and to alter their our daily activities when NCRC parents fill up the streets dropping off and picking up their children. Everyone often faces dangerous driving and crowded streets with no room to pass (even on Newark St). Trying to turn from 34th into Newark St or exit Newark onto 34th when NCRC parents are exiting Newark onto 34th is a nightmare. One has to wait sometimes several minutes on very busy 34th St. to turn into Newark St. Large SUVs are lined down Newark waiting to exit onto 34th St along parked cars on both sides of Newark. There is not enough room for cars to enter into Newark.

This Board saw in a video an empty Highland Place during weekends. Neighbors and I walk that block regularly, and would do so during the week but do not do so now, especially older people -- with what you saw in the video -- cars lined up, doing u turns, and going around the pick up line. Neighbors, me among them, not living on Highland, do not venture to visit friends on Highland during drop off and pick up time or to deliver things to them. Neighbors and I who live on the surrounding streets of Newark (where I live), also Ordway, and 34th St are overwhelmed with the traffic that comes from NCRC drivers coming out 33rd Place onto Newark St and out onto 34th place. Neighbors and family in our home are trying to leave our residences for work and deliver our children to other schools when NCRC parents drop off their children. Also neighbors and others driving through Newark and Ordway either to Connecticut Ave from 34th or vice a versa from 34th St encounter congestion from NCRC parents during drop off and pick up times at NCRC.

Maureen Dwyer asked the Cleveland Park Friends' Traffic consultant if NCRC traffic was similar to other schools - - a yes or no question. He replied yes. If allowed to elaborate the answer would be other schools are located on larger roads and main thoroughfares. Other schools have sidewalks, have side streets along the street they are on, and sometimes have plenty of room for parking. Many schools have a long driveway or circle which parents can pull into, off of the street while waiting to pick up children. NCRC, as you have heard, is located on a small winding road barely wide enough for two cars to pass with no sidewalks, built in the 1800s and no room for growth to change it given the old houses there and now named a historic district. Maureen Dwyer intimated it was apples to apples -- it is not -- it is apples to oranges. The NCRC traffic can not compared to other school's traffic in terms of safety and orderly pick up and discharging of children.

I have heard that DC regulations at the time of NCRC's founding read that 50% of the students were to come from the surrounding neighborhood. This neighborhood has valued NCRC, has contributed greatly to their student body since their founding, has served on their Boards of Directors, and has donated a great deal of money to keep the school thriving. We are asking that NCRC continue their wonderful school, but not to impinge on the neighborhood, not to destroy the livability of the neighborhood, nor destroy the safety of walking , and drivability on the neighborhood's roads due to unsafe conditions the school caused because of the school's "Wish List" to be the biggest and best in town.

I , like most of my neighbors, again you saw the map of neighbors against NCRC's expansion ask the BZA to deny NCRC's application, and also to not subject the Cleveland Park to yet another trial period.