In opposition - NCRC case 16970

Statement of Susan Hammond, 3212 Newark Street NW, Washington, DC
November 3, 2003

I am very concerned about existing parking problems; with an increase in the number of students at NCRC, these can only become worse. Recently in the late afternoon I spent 1/2 hour driving around the neighborhood in search of a parking space. There was no space anywhere on Highland Place, 33rd Street, Ashley Terrace, or in the long stretch of Newark Street between Highland Place and 34th Street.

I drove once more down Highland Place, hoping that a space had opened up. Near NCRC a staff member was "directing" traffic; I stopped to speak to her, to ask what was going on at the school and to shed light on why there were no available parking spaces. Her response was: "Don't you have a driveway?" -- implying that I certainly should have one, and should not be needing, or perhaps even wanting, a parking space on the street. Nor did there seem to be any concept of concern, or of cooperation between school and neighbors to work out what is certainly a shared issue. The proposed changes at NCRC will have an adverse effect on traffic and on parking, and make the current difificult and dangerous situation even worse. I oppose these changes.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 328

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.328

Testimony partially given Nov. 4 **In opposition** to the NCRC application 16970

My name is Dandridge Ince. I, my husband and three children have lived at 3224 Highland Place across the street from NCRC for 29 years. Two of our three children went to NCRC in the 1970ties when the school was much smaller. We have always liked having the children and their cheery voices across the street.

But we have not always liked the traffic. Starting in the 1980ties we saw sections of our fence destroyed 3 or 4 times a year by NCRC cars turning around in the narrow street. Some days we could not get out of our gate because cars parked illegally in front of it. And in those days, there was no residential parking restriction so teachers parked all day long when they could find the places before 8:30 am.

NCRC has no off-street parking or driveway. Every car and truck that comes to the school has to find space in the street to do business there.

On the days when I have to use our car, this is my reaction…conditioned by 29 years of experience of NCRC traffic. I know the traffic is NCRC's because on days when the school is not in session so few cars use the

street that it could not even be called traffic. The street really does not go anywhere and only Highland Place and Newark Street residents and a few lost souls drive on it.

On school days my heart starts to race as step out of my front door. I ask myself if I have to go out before 8am and find an all day teacher in the parking spot when I return. Or can I wait til 8:30 giving me a shot at finding a parking place if I plan well enough to get home between one of NCRC's five traffic bulges when many parents park to drop off or pick up their children, or other business is taking place at NCRC. But if I leave at 8:30, will I be late because of the back-up at 34th and Newark?

By the time I am at my gate, I am scanning the streetscape to see whether any cars could hit me as they hurry out of the pickup/drop-off line. But my main anxiety is for the children and their parents walking in the street. I wait until they are safely out of the way and then I dash across the street to my car.

You saw the situation on Ordway, Highland and on 33rd place during school hours on the Beckner's video. Children and caretakers struggling to get out of a car and/or walking to school, competing for street space with a car or "truck". I see this

happening everyday on Highland and 33rd Place and each time my heart is in my throat. I fear the worst could happen anytime.

Highland Place is essentially a pedestrian throughway. It is the short cut to a path that leads to the Metro, making pedestrian travel heavy in the morning and late afternoon. It is a playground for neighborhood children because back yards are a rarity in Cleveland Park. Houses are very close together so neighbors know each other well and children as young as 5 and 6 walk, ride bikes, scooters, skate boards, etc. back and forth between houses.

As part of its TMP, NCRC proposes to co-opt the stretch of public street parking in front of its playground.

At the time the rest of Highland Place was being put under residential restricted parking, NCRC's neighbors, **who have no off street parking**, granted its request to leave this strip unrestricted so the teachers could share these places with the neighbors.

Now NCRC wants to take over all 4 spaces contending that taking 4 more spaces will reduce the double parking at the east end by four cars. The shell game continues. How can they say 4 spaces **will** make a difference

when they also say 10 more students **will not** make a difference.

It does not seem efficacious or fair to change traffic and parking patterns which have worked well in Cleveland Park for 100 years to make what at best would be a questionable improvement in the traffic management situation of a special exception institution and make life unquestionably more difficult for the residents.

Please do not think that any changes in parking or street direction would solve NCRC's traffic problems without making it all worse for Highland, Ordway, Newark and 34th.

Thank you for bearing with us. I realize that some of this testimony should have been allowed under other agency jurisdictions. But since it has not, we particularly want to thank you for letting us bring these facts to your attention.

TO: The Board of Zoning Adjustment Members

Statement in Opposition to NCRC application 16970

My name is William K. Ince. I have lived at 3224 Highland Place for 29 years.

According to zoning regulations, the Zoning Board is authorized to grant special exceptions if they "will not tend to affect adversely the use of neighboring property," and a child development center is permitted if its location and design will have "no objectionable traffic condition and no unsafe condition for picking up and dropping off children.", and will have "no objectionable impacts on adjacent or nearby properties due to noise, activity, visual, or other objectionable conditions."

There should be no doubt - after all the testimony and other evidence presented to this Board, that these conditions are not met, and that there is no reasonable expectation that they can be met. Instead of abiding by the current BZA order (1998) to solve the traffic problem, the school administration has elected to propose an expansion that will further exacerbate the problem, and has suggested supposed solutions - such as eliminating neighbors' parking spaces and making Highland one way - that not only will **not** solve the problem, but will further adversely affect neighboring property. This is contrary to zoning regulations. The only sensible solution is to reduce the school enrollment.

The school can continue with its mission with fewer children. That mission was fulfilled in the 70ties and 80ties with a smaller enrollment and creative use of the facilities. NCRC then had a nationally recognized program for deaf children. They came from all over the city and included students from DC's special education programs who arrived in a school bus everyday. Times have changed but bigger is not necessarily better. Especially in an Historic District where the rationale is to preserve the physical characteristics and ambiance of the past for the benefit of all District citizens.