ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3C
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS • CLEVELAND PARK • MASSACHUSETTS AVE. HEIGHTS
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December 15, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chair, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Re: National Child Research Center, Application No. 16970

Dear Chairman Griffis,

On behalf of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C I am submitting a response to the report from the Ward 3 planner for the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Colleen Hawkinson, that was submitted to the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) just prior to the close of the hearings on the National Child Research Center (NCRC) special exception application.

I visited the site on Friday, December 12, 2003, arriving at Highland Place at 8:35AM and leaving the site at 9:16AM. What I observed parallels the findings of Ms. Hawkinson in some instances, but also deviates substantially from what she reported. When I arrived there was a uniformed person at the 33rd St. and Newark St. intersection. There were 3 orange-vested persons near the sidewalk in front of the school and there was a uniformed person with a clipboard also in front of the school but closer to the bend in the road. At this time there were no children arriving, nor vehicles queuing so I drove to Ordway St. and parked.

There were no orange vested persons, uniformed persons, or anyone accepting children on Ordway St. I observed cars approaching the school from both the east and west. Most of the cars parked across the street from the school. One adult allowed a toddler to run across the street in front of her while she held the hand of a slightly older child. One car made a U-turn to leave the school heading in the opposite direction from the direction that he/she parked. There was considerable eastbound traffic that did not stop at the school. Whenever a westbound car approached one direction of traffic would stop to allow the vehicle(s) heading in the opposite direction to pass. Both sides of the road were heavily parked up, which made two-way traffic very risky and thus, necessitated that one direction stop while the opposite directional cars proceeded. I left Ordway St. at 8:52AM and returned to Highland Place.

Since I entered from 34th St. onto the one-way section of Highland Place I did not notice whether the uniformed person was still at the 33rd and Newark intersection. The orange-vested persons were no longer outside, but the uniformed man with the clipboard was still at the same location. As I approached the bend in the road I had to quickly brake because a car that I could not see was approaching from the opposite direction. I was traveling very slowly so it was not difficult to avoid what would have been a head-on collision, but I looked at the uniformed person standing not 15 feet from my car, wondering why he hadn't warned me and realized that he was intent on the clipboard. After I parked I observed cars (all but one an SUV) approach the school, park, and walk children up to the school. None of these cars arrived

BZA
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Exhibit No. 334

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simultaneously, but they each arrived soon after the previous car had parked. I also saw children being walked to the school from the other direction, but I couldn't tell whether they had exited cars or were walkers. I saw two persons, one of which seemed to come from the school, pushing strollers down the street. Most of the children walking to the school from my direction were using the path rather than walking in the street. At 9:14AM the man with the clipboard removed the orange cones in front of NCRC and left. I left at 9:16AM.

Based on my observations, I think the information provided by Ms. Hawkinson is of limited value. First, she stood in front of the school probably with a clipboard at each visit and was therefore, a visible new presence that undoubtedly encouraged good behavior. If her presence had not been observed her report would offer a snapshot of early morning activity on Highland Place, just as my observations provide information about one day during one time period. That she neither visited Ordway St. nor stayed beyond the expressed 8:50AM termination of the early morning drop off indicates that her observations were incomplete. DDOT has been informed that NCRC seems to have both increased the drop offs on Ordway and expanded the drop off duration beyond even the time limits of their revised Traffic Management Plan. Are these practices going to continue? Why weren't there any attendants on Ordway St. as required by the zoning conditions? What is the experience at other drop-off and pick-up times, which are all included in the zoning conditions? These are all appropriate questions for DDOT to address and the answers would be useful to the BZA deliberations. That DDOT conducted such a limited evaluation renders the results of little probity value.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my observations with you and to comment on the DDOT report.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. MacWood
Chair, ANC 3C

Cc: Maureen Dwyer
Friends of NCRC
Katherine Marshall
Richard Nettler
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