GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

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June 17, 2004

William H. Jeffress, Jr.
Baker Botts
1299 Pennsylavania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Re: BZA Application No. 16970 (3209 Highland Place, N.W.) NCRC

Dear Mr. Jeffress:

The Office of Zoning (OZ) received your motion (attached), dated June 16, 2004, in the above-cited application. Your letter was not filed in a timely manner in accordance with the requirements of 11 DCMR § 3121.9 of the Zoning Regulations, which reads: "Any material received by the Board after the close of the record that bears upon the substance of the appeal or application shall be returned by the Director and not received into the files of the Board." The record in the subject case closed on April 13, 2004. Please be advised that you are entitled to re-file your request (motion) within 10 days from the date of the issuance of the final written order by the Board pursuant to 11 DCMR § 3126.2 (RECONSIDERATION OR REHEARING). For these reasons, the OZ is returning your motion to you. Please call Richard S. Nero, Jr., Chief, Support Services and Quality Control at (202) 727-6311, if you have any questions relevant to the foregoing.

SINCERELY,

JERRILY R. KRESS, FAIA
Director, Office of Zoning

Attachment
Certificate of Service
rsn

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 371

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.371

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

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BZA APPLICATION NO. 16970

As Director of the Office of Zoning, I hereby certify and attest that on JUN 17 2004 a copy of the attached letter was mailed first class, postage prepaid or delivered via inter-agency mail, to each party and public agency who appeared and participated in the public hearing concerning the matter, and who is listed below:

William H. Jeffress, Jr.
Baker Botts
1299 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Maureen E. Dwyer, Esq.
Paul Tummonds, Esq.
Shaw Pittman LLP
2300 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Nancy MacWood, Chairperson
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3C
3417 Woodley Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

The Cleveland Park Neighbors
c/o Richard Nettler, Esq.
Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi, LLP
Suite 1200
1801 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Gaylord Neely & Linda Badami
3207 Highland Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Sallie R. Beckner and R. Bruce Beckner
Fleishman and Walsh, LLP
1400 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

The Friends of NCRC
c/o Anne Large
3520 35th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Katharine Marshall
3208 Highland Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Henry P. Little
The Nature Conservancy
201 Mission Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Steven R. Hunsicker
Baker Botts, LLP
The Warner
1299 Pennsylania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Ellen McCarthy
Deputy Director
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

ATTESTED BY: _____
JERRILY R. KRESS, FAIA
Director, Office of Zoning

rsn

BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Application of the National Child Research Center BZA Application No. 16970

MOTION TO DISQUALIFY CHAIRMAN GEOFFREY GRIFFIS AND TO VACATE VOTES TAKEN MARCH 9 AND APRIL 13, 2004

The Cleveland Park Neighbors, Steve Hunsicker, Sallie R. and R. Bruce Beckner, Henry Little and Linda Badami and Gaylord Neely (collectively referred to as the "Opposition parties") hereby move to disqualify Chairman Geoffrey Griffis on the grounds of personal bias and to vacate decisions of the Board taken by votes on March 9, and April 13, 2004.

This relief is requested based upon the recent discovery of incontrovertible evidence that Chairman Griffis does have today and has had for many months a close personal relationship with a Trustee of NCRC who has been deeply involved in the school's effort to seek favorable action from the BZA with respect to the school's application to expand. This individual, both as a Trustee and as a member of a working group specially constituted by the school for the purpose of pursuing this initiative, has spent more than two years working on NCRC's Application before this Board and has been an active proponent of it. She has submitted at least two letters addressed to the Chairman, and has regularly attended public hearings on the application. Out of respect for the privacy of Chairman Griffis and the Trustee in question, the Opposition parties do not identify the Trustee or provide particulars of the nature of the relationship in this motion. We are, however, supplying the Trustee's name to counsel for NCRC and will submit particulars of the relationship to the Board either publicly or in executive session as the Board may decide.

The criteria governing recusal of judicial officers apply equally to agency decisionmakers acting in an adjudicative capacity. Morrison v. Board of Zoning Adjustment, 422 A.2d 347, 349-50 (D.C. 1980); Dupont Circle Citizens Ass'n. v. Alcoholic Bev. Control Bd., 766 A.2d 59, 65 (D.C. 2001). Judicial disqualification is required when "the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned." ABA Model Code of Judicial Conduct, Canon 3 E(1); 28 U.S.C. § 455. A judge is automatically disqualified when his or her spouse, or a person within the third degree of relationship to either of them, is a party in the proceeding. Canon 3 E(1)(d). When the judge's relationship with a party is other than blood or marriage, the question is whether the relationship "would convince a reasonable [person] that a bias exists" that is "personal, as opposed to judicial, in nature." Carter v. Carter, 615 A.2d 197, 199 (D.C. 1992). The relationship between Chairman Griffis and the NCRC Trustee is personal. It is not merely social and is not casual. It is unquestionably one that would convince a reasonable person that bias exists toward her.

The history of these proceedings demonstrates that in order to avoid taint in these proceedings, decisions made by the Board on March 9 and April 13, 2004, should be vacated.

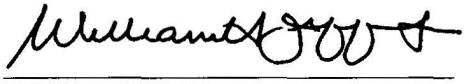
Hearings on NCRC's application for permission to construct a new classroom building, to construct an addition to the existing building, to replace a small shed on the property, and to increase enrollment and staffing commenced in February 2003. On May 6, 2003, the Board ruled that the application required a variance, not a special exception. NCRC moved for reconsideration. After soliciting the views of other members, Chairman Griffis announced that there was "a consensus of the Board that we will not at this point have a reconsideration deliberation on that motion." Tr. June 24, 2003, at 155.

On January 6, 2004, the Board sua sponte reversed itself on the question whether a variance was required. Having reversed its earlier ruling that NCRC's application required a variance, the board proceeded to treat the application as if it were an application for a special exception. The Board nevertheless voted to deny NCRC's application by a 3-1 vote (Chairman Griffis dissenting). On February 17, however, at a "Special Public Meeting" without notice to the Opposition parties, Chairman Griffis announced that "I believe that it is the Board's intention to reopen the deliberation and reconsider part of a vote on a recent application. And that is for the application of NCRC." Tr. February 17, 2004, at 9. As Chairman Griffis predicted, the Board did reconsider and, on March 9, it decided to reopen deliberations on the application insofar as it sought approval of new construction. On April 13, the Board voted 3-1 (Commissioner Etherly dissenting) to reverse itself and approve the construction as requested by NCRC.

It is extraordinary for the Board to reconsider and reverse itself not just once but twice in the same proceeding. Since January 6, 2004, the Chairman has – without disclosing the nature of his personal relation with Trustee – used his position behind the scenes as well as in public hearings to advance the school's cause. The Chairman has identified issues, prepared agendas, scheduled hearings and served as an advocate for the school's cause with the internal discussions and deliberations of the BZA. He has also voted (either in the majority or in dissent) in favor of NCRC's position at every turn. The Opposition parties aver on information and belief that the Chairman's relationship with the NCRC Trustee was either ongoing or anticipated by the Chairman on and after January 6, 2004. The Chairman's failure to disclose both the fact and the nature of his personal relationship with the NCRC Trustee has tainted these proceedings. To eliminate the taint and to restore integrity to the process and procedures of the BZA, it is

necessary that the actions taken by the Board at these proceedings be vacated. Accordingly, the Opposition Parties request that all actions since January 6, 2004 – including the votes of March 9 and April 13, 2004 -- be vacated.

Respectfully submitted,



William H. Jeffress, Jr.
Baker Botts
1299 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: 202-639-7751

Of counsel for Cleveland Park Neighbors
Richard B. Nettler
Robbins, Kaplan and Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.
Suite 1200
1801 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Bruce and Sallie Beckner

Henry P. Little

Linda Badami and Gaylord Neely

Steven R. Hunsicker

OTHER PARTIES IN OPPOSITION TO THE APPLICATION

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the Motion To Disqualify Chairman Geoffrey Griffis and To Vacate Votes Taken March 9 and April 13, 2004 was served by Fax to Maureen Dwyer and by regular mail on the following:

ANC 3C
Nancy MacWood, Chairperson
2737 Devonshire Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Mr. Denzel Noble, Deputy Administrator
Building & Land Regulation Admin.
Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs
941 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Room 2000
Washington, D.C. 20002

Arthur Jackson
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol St., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Ellen McCarthy
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol St., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

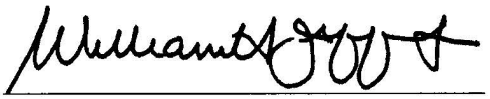
Gaylord Neely & Linda Badami
3207 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Steven R. Hunsicker
Baker Botts, LLP
1299 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004-2400

Henry P. Little
The Nature Conservancy
201 Mission Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

The Friends of NCRC
c/o Anne Large
P.O. Box 11219
Cleveland Park Station
Washington, DC 20008-9998

Katharine Marshall
3208 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008



William H. Jeffress, Jr.