COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

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July 15, 2003

Mr. Geoffrey H. Griffis, Chairperson
D.C. Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Case No. 17022 (Burke School)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I urge the Board of Zoning Adjustment to consider carefully the views of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3-F which has voted to recommend denial of case 17022. In this case the Edmund Burke School seeks to legitimize an increase in its population and faculty, and to enlarge its facility to include property at 4101 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Most of the residential property owners in the immediate vicinity oppose the application.

The primary criterion for evaluating school expansion is that the school "is not likely to become objectionable to adjoining and nearby property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or otherwise objectionable conditions." While the Burke School is academically excellent, I do not see how this criterion can be met. In the two years since Burke was last before you, residential property owners have continued to complain about difficult traffic conditions, as well as objectionable student behavior off-campus, proximate to the school. Even though Burke proposes significant traffic mitigation, I do not see how the objectionable conditions will be eliminated, as required.

Moreover, the opposing property owners have no confidence in Burke's mitigation plans, assuming *arguendo* their efficacy, because Burke continues to be in violation of the terms of the last BZA expansion order (in 1983). The zoning scheme cannot have integrity if its requirements are ignored without penalty. Burke has had at least three years since it was "caught" over the caps, but it has yet to correct its behavior to comply with the current rules.

I find this type of case unpleasant because typically the school parents feel the academic reputation and future of their school is being questioned. I don't challenge either. But that is not the issue before you. Rather, the test is whether the special exception will affect adversely the use of neighboring property, or is likely to become objectionable. Please consider this carefully.

Sincerely,

Phil Mendelson

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
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BZA
Case No. 17022
Exhibit No. 119

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17022
EXHIBIT NO. 119