Mount Vernon Square Neighborhood Association

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June 1, 2004

Mr. Geoffrey H. Griffis
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

RE: BZA Application No. 17160

Dear Mr. Griffis:

I am writing regarding a matter before the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA). The Northwest Settlement House, located on Ridge Street, NW in the Mt. Vernon Square neighborhood for over 40 years, is seeking to expand their facility. Their board feels strongly that their staff and clients—children from our community—deserve a more attractive and larger facility.

Northwest Settlement House board and staff members presented their ideas and plans during a regularly-scheduled meeting of the Mt. Vernon Square Neighborhood Association on April 20, 2004. With their architect, they presented conceptual plans for a new two-storey building and redesign of the outdoor recreation space. They heard our concerns about possible increased automobile traffic on Ridge Street and answered questions about the number of youth to be served by the new facility. A poll taken at the conclusion of this presentation revealed that our neighbors are supportive of the good educational programs of the Northwest Settlement House but have concerns about the density of the new project. Indeed, the group present was split 50/50 in their decision to support or not support the proposed expansion.

Because this split revealed anxiety not about the good work of the Northwest Settlement House, but about the impact that the new project will have on the infrastructure of Ridge Street, I am writing to ask that you give every consideration to the organization's request. I am confident that a carefully planned and executed expanded facility is possible with thoughtful guidance and recommendations from the BZA. We understand that the new facility will provide a meeting space for seniors, a computer lab, study and activity space, as well as classrooms specially designed for infants and toddlers.

We will maintain an open dialog with the leadership of the organization to address community concerns, such as construction challenges, automobile traffic congestion and illegal parking. At the same time we ask the board and staff of the Northwest Settlement House to continue their open door policy and to continue to share their accomplishments with our community.

Sincerely,

Timothy P. Downey
President
Mt. Vernon Square Neighborhood Association

BZA
Case No. 17160
Exhibit No. 41

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17160
EXHIBIT NO. 41