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Geoffrey Griffs, Chair
DC Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 17304

This letter is to express my strong and steadfast opposition to the WMATA Application 17304 that would allow for the construction of the five-story commercial building and parking lot that is to be built at 45 th and Benning Road, NE, and 46th and Central Avenue NE. **Due to the absence of required notice to affected residents, I request and urge you to delay action on the BZA application until such time as the community has been heard on this matter.**

OPPOSED TO PROJECT

For the record, I am passionately opposed to this project that would place such a large number of criminals (ex-offenders) in our vulnerable community. As a resident of the District of Columbia for 41 years, I am very disturbed and most offended by my government. You have surreptitiously deprived me and my neighbors of due notice pertaining to the application for the proposed project and the opportunity to voice our concerns in a community forum, and to comment in writing and respond in a timely manner.

DEPRIVATION OF NOTICE AND RIGHT TO BE HEARD

I am extremely appalled and feel victimized by the underhanded way this project has been allowed to progress without us—in particular, the property owners who live on the even numbered side of 46 th St. NE that have been deprived of any opportunity for input until the final steps in the process are about to occur. We are the tax-paying, law-abiding citizens most directly adversely affected by the proposed action, and yet, we were not notified. It is clear that the exclusion was intentional to deprive us of our right to notice and our right to be heard.

QUESTIONABLE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PROJECT VERSUS SAFETY, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, CONVENIENCE, QUALITY

BZA
Case No. 17304
Exhibit No. 55

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17304
EXHIBIT NO. 55

OF LIFE, AND WILL OF COMMUNITY HOMEOWNERS AND RESIDENTS

While proponents of the project claim that the construction of the proposed building will reap economic benefits for the community, they are unable to specify, qualify, or quantify what these benefits are. I, and many others in my community are not impressed with the rhetoric of the "developers" and we are not convinced that anything pertaining to the proposed project will be of benefit to the homeowners in this community. To the contrary, there is a strong belief that if the construction proceeds as proposed, it may reap benefits for the "developers," but will be detrimental to our community in many ways.

I live at 154 46th Street, NE, an estimated 150 feet from where this building is to be built. I have a double-gate that opens up into this alley that is being proposed for use as a thoroughfare, and we have a truck that must come in and out of this gate daily. The proposed conversion of the alley would pose a serious **safety hazard** and **interfere with my husband's livelihood** and our source of household revenue causing **extreme hardship to my family**. This alley is much too small to handle the kind of traffic congestion that the proposed rerouting would create.

We have an **autistic son** that must get on and off the school bus in the front of our house twice daily on 46th Street, NE. Surely, you are well aware that this rerouting of traffic is going to result in a significant increase in traffic up 46th Street, NE as drivers take a shortcut to get from Central Avenue, NE to Blaine Street, NE, rather than going all the way around the block to get to Blaine Street. The proposed plan would place a **double burden all our children and senior citizens.** It would cause an uncontrollable amount of traffic on this very narrow street, resulting in an **unsafe environment for my handicapped son**. Currently, on any given day without this extra traffic, we have problems with impatient persons blowing their horns for the school bus to move because the street is too narrow to pass. It is a known fact that children with autism do not respond well to loud noises because of their inability to separate sound as normal people can. There is a strong likelihood that this could create a situation of hyperactivity on the bus that may be unsafe for the students, the aide who has to monitor them, and the bus driver. **My son also suffers from breathing problems associated with his asthma** and all of this direct-impact additional traffic will certainly affect his health, as well as the many elderly residents on our street.

The **repercussions of this project are far-reaching. It** would destroy not only our peace, but also inflict more wear and tear on the streets from the heavy traffic and congestion; noise levels and exhaust fumes would increase, and personal safety will be more endangered from so much traffic; our personal lifestyles will be changed in a restrictive manner and the quality of life in our community will be diminished -- especially for those of us who live on the even numbered side of 46th Street, NE. We would be totally "boxed in" with the traffic from the front, sides, and the back, and that is a tremendous negative impact that none of us should have to endure.

Another serious concern for me is the issue of our **property values being compromised** because of the fear factor of so many ex-offenders being literally located right in our backyards. This adverse impact, as well as traffic congestion, high noise levels, poor air quality, restr icted pedestrian mobility, and diminution in the quality of life will certainly not enhance property values, and it is quite reasonable to conclude that values may decrease.

I have to leave my son on many mornings to get on the bus alone, come home alone, and stay there until I get home from work. I cannot begin to express and make you understand how horrified and fearful I am for my son's safety. His greatest disability is his inability to communicate, which creates a problem within itself without the risk of exposure to an enlarged criminal element (ex-offenders), increased traffic, more people in the neighborhood, and a greater risk of encounter with adverse results.

The thought of him coming in and out of our home alone with so many ex-offenders concentrated in our immediate vicinity causes me deep concern. The ex-offenders were referred to as "some of our most vulnerable citizens." This is a real insult--who is more vulnerable, those who have chosen to commit crimes, or a disabled child, law-abiding taxpayers, and our seniors who are afraid that they will become prisoners in their own homes?

The surreptitious actions in this matter thus far, the "developer rhetoric," and the disregard for our community, gives the appearance and impression t hat those of us who pay taxes in this neighborhood are not considered to be important at all. The question that I pose to you is **"Would you feel safe with this type of facility in your back yard?" If you are honest amongst yourselves, then the answer would be a unanimous "NO".**

I am 61 years old and it took me all these years, until five years ago, to be able to finally purchase my first home. For many months I looked to find the best possible neighborhood for my son so that I could feel comfortable enough to leave him while I work. Now I am being told that he and I no longer deserve this peace of mind because the ex-offenders must have "this site" to have a another chance to become productive citizens. I ask you, where is my son's chance at life, does it have to be compromised? Surely, there are other sites that would serve this purpose better than our backyards.

In addition, I am greatly concerned about the limited parking on our street that may be taken over by the employees of this facility. Parking is already an issue in this area due to subway commuters who park along 46th Street. Bringing both variables to this equation promises to bring uncontrollable traffic and congestion, as well as inconvenience and frustration to those of us that live here. The community has complained many times to the police department and for a while they wrote tickets, but in spite of all our efforts, we still seem to be at the mercy of those who choose to violate the rights of our residents.

I have heard the argument more than once from the CSOSA representative that 85% of their employees will be using metro. Even if this is a valid statistic, this block of 46th Street, in particular, cannot accommodate the other 15% that will drive. It will create an even greater problem for those of us who own homes here to be able to find parking close to our houses.

This is a community of families, grandparents, senior citizens and young children whose lives would be very greatly and forever altered to a foreseeable unpleasant end if this travesty is allowed to continue. We all feel that those of us in this block of 46th Street, NE have been targeted as "the sacrificial lamb" for this entire project.

I am begging you to hear our voices and our concerns, and to please be reasonable, considerate, and just. Stop this invasion on our safety, our lives, our properties, and our community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn M. Williams

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Cc: Honorable Eleanor Holmes-Norton
Mayor Anthony Williams
Council-Member Vincent Gray/Ward 7
Council-Chair Linda Cropp
Council-Member Carol Schwartz
Council-Member David Cantania
Council-Member Phil Mendleson
Council-Member Kwame Brown
Exec. Dir./DC Watch Donna Brizill
Chairperson Dorothy Douglas/ANC-7D