1201 Constitution Ave. NE
Washington, D.C.20002
Aug. 15, 2006

BZA # 17532

District of Columbia Office of Zoning
441 4th Street, NW Suite 210 South
Washington, D.C. 20001

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2006 AUG 18 PM 12:48

Re: Location of 16-student charter schools in R-4 zones

Dear Sir or Madam:

We understand you are considering a text amendment to the zoning code that would allow 16-student charter schools to locate in residential neighborhoods as a matter of right. We urge you to reject the amendment, or in the alternative, set minimum standards requiring adequate facilities, including parking, playgrounds, and traffic and noise considerations. Failing that, a school could be located in an entirely inappropriate location to the detriment of an established neighborhood. That would be especially true if schools were allowed to subdivide a property, meaning 32 or more children in a single property with no input from the neighborhood. Indeed, at a recent hearing on this subject, residents of Kingman Park said they have been overwhelmed with charter schools and had no opportunity for their views to be heard about them.

Our immediate concern is the Appletree Institute, which is proposing a charter school at 138 12th Street NE. But the issue is of great importance to all city neighborhoods. The 12th Street building is zoned R-4 and is in the midst of a block of historic homes with no other commercial use. The block is bounded by two busy streets, one of which is one-way at all times and one that is one-way in the mornings. The lot is small, and Appletree proposes to expand the existing structure to fill nearly the entire lot, leaving no room for parking or a playground. In contrast, Maury Elementary School, which is on our block, has plenty of room for all the facilities that children and their teachers need. We urge you to require that charter schools locate in buildings like Maury, or other similar sites, and not destroy residential neighborhoods that are so important to the quality of life in the city.

We note that Appletree's appeal is on the BZA's agenda for Nov. 21 and that it asks for "approval for a proposed addition to an existing public charter school" at 138 12th St. NE. We assume you realize there is no charter school operating at that address, making the wording of the appeal inaccurate.

Sincerely,

Joanne E. Beck

Robert L. Baker

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17532
EXHIBIT NO. 14

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 17532
EXHIBIT NO. 14