

Gregory Ferenbach
4300 42nd Street, NW
Washington DC 20016

District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment

Re: BZA Case No. 20472 (Application for Special Exception of the River School)

Dear Chairman Hill and Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

I live at 4300 42nd Street within 200 feet of the site of the proposed River School development project. I write to urge you to reject River School's application for a special exception, Case #20472.

The proposed relocation and significant expansion of the River School to 4220 Nebraska Avenue, NW is an overly aggressive and deeply flawed plan and it will adversely impact our residential neighborhood. The existing residential property is simply not adequate to support The River School's plans. The scope of the project, and the proposed large (and very young) student population, will obviously result in traffic and safety issues in the surrounding area. The project will produce objectionable conditions to neighboring properties, and these adverse impacts simply cannot be mitigated consistent with the proponent's plans. Indeed, putting a daily population of approximately 500 people on a 2.2 acre residentially-zoned lot seems almost objectionable on its face.

At the hearing you will doubtless hear much about how traffic and safety conditions have deteriorated in this part of the city. Even The River School's traffic management plan acknowledges that several local intersections are already not meeting DDOT's standards. In part this is because there are already many schools in the area, and one major university, each of which has requested and been granted a special exception from zoning authorities.

The effect of granting so many special exceptions is that they now threaten to fundamentally change the character of a quiet neighborhood that is intended for single family homes. At some point, this "special exception" swallows up the underlying rule: the very purpose of the zoning designation of our neighborhoods is being undercut.

ANC 3E, the city agency that has studied this proposal the most closely, by far, essentially reached this same conclusion: enough is enough. Voting against any special exception application is quite unusual for this ANC, and I would submit their decision should be given extra weight. (In contrast, the DDOT and OP reports offer only the most superficial analysis, accepting the proponents claims as submitted. This is not analysis; it is just wishful thinking. Notably missing from the DDOT report is any acknowledgement of years of requests from the Tenleytown and AU Park communities to more effectively address the EXISTING traffic and safety issues around 4220 Nebraska Ave, NW.)

The River School application to relocate and expand their school to 4220 Nebraska Ave, NW, not to mention adding a national research institute, is just too large. As a result, it will result in objectionable conditions, including traffic, that will adversely impact the neighborhood. It therefore fails to meet the criteria for a special exception.

There is a reason this lot and the surrounding area is zoned R-1-B: to protect the residential character of our neighborhood. Please uphold the rights of District residents!

Respectfully submitted,

s/ Gregory Ferenbach