

TESTIMONY
ZONING COMMISSION ROUNDTABLE ON ANTENNAS AND ANTENNA TOWERS

Philip Blair, jr.—Father
Monday, 19 March 2001

Madame Chair, members of the Zoning Commission, and fellow citizens:

I am speaking tonight as the father of Harriet. Hattie is a seventh grader at Alice Deal Junior High. Her school is surrounded by transmission towers and antenna. Of course I knew of some of these, just from passing through the neighborhood; nevertheless, it was a surprise to see how many there were on the map that Commissioner Anne Loikow prepared and presented to you at an earlier meeting.

I know that the health issues concerning transmission tower and antenna are complicated and consensus is hard to come by. However, there are three things I *do* know and I want you to take these three facts into most serious consideration in your deliberations.

First, I know that am neither a physicist nor a physician. I know that none of you all are either. Yet all of us can follow the Hippocratic principle: First, do no damage. In any question that involves the health of my child, I expect you to err on the side of caution, if err you must. As a political fact of life, I am only one of the more than 100,000 parents of children in the District. (And having the word "Charter" in the name of your child's school, or paying tuition at a private school is no defense against electromagnetic radiation—as all parents know.) If the perception develops that this board is callous or dismissive of our concerns for our children, there will be serious repercussions. You must not only do the right thing, you must make it clear that you are doing the right thing.

Secondly, I know that we do not have good data publicly available at this time to

even be able to list the towers and antenna installed on or near schools or other locations of especial concern. It should not fall to unpaid citizen activists to collect and publish this information. I would much rather that ANC commissioners and concerned parents be able to check and verify published data rather than develop it in the first place. I will work on the DCPS angle of this issue myself. I want to know what the Realty Office of DCPS knows about towers and antenna on DCPS property or nearby. I strongly feel that this is an issue of basic accountability for the Board of Education, the Superintendent's Office, and the Council of the District of Columbia. I know that individual PTAs and the D.C. Congress of PTAs—as well as other organizations such as Parents United—will follow this issue with great interest.

Thirdly, I know that nobody is manning the periscope. The simplest but most relevant data on total and cumulative electro-magnetic exposure at school sites is not available. This is an appalling situation. The FCC, I have learned, does not take the responsibility of monitoring this radiation. I know better than to expect the companies that use these towers to provide this documentation, individually or collectively. (Even though this attitude is a disservice to their own stockholders too.) I know, from the case of the city epidemiologist who was fired for uncovering rotting food in a DCPS warehouse and on the lunch trays of DCPS students, that the Mayor of this city is not likely to spontaneously provide honest data without prompting.

I dare to suggest to you that you have the obligation to see that such monitoring systems are in place and functioning before continuing

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to permit towers and antennas, like metallic kudzu, to over-run our city. If this involves a

fee to be paid by the companies using these towers and antennas, so be it.

Thank you....

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