

**COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF
STONEBRIDGE DEVELOPMENT
AT 5401 WESTERN AVENUE**

DECEMBER 12, 2002 ZONING HEARING

Good Evening. My name is Caitlin Wood Sklar, and I live at 5544 29th Street, NW, off of Military Road. I am a parent and Board member at the Chevy Chase Plaza Children's Center. I support the Stonebridge proposed development of 5401 Western Avenue for several reasons:

1. As someone with a concern for the environment, I prefer high density housing built in proximity to public transportation (i.e. metro) vs. the suburban sprawl which is eating away at farmland and wooded areas surrounding Washington, DC.
2. I am impressed by the extent to which this particular developer has worked to integrate the desires of the community into their plans for the site - reducing the overall size of the project both in terms of height and square footage and in terms of number of units. Also, I am pleased with their attempts to preserve greenspace and save mature trees.
3. Finally, with regards to the childcare center that will be built - first, let me state that my child will not personally be able to benefit from this new building. However, this is definitely a public amenity. The childcare shortage in Washington, DC has reached crisis proportions. The waitlists at individual centers, such as the Children's Center, are so long that new families frequently do not bother to add their child to the list. I have several friends with new babies that were very interested in CCPC, but figured it was a lost cause and did not put their name on the waitlist. Therefore, the waitlist numbers below are probably a conservative estimate of the real problem.

The following statistics come from a report by the DC Agenda Support Corporation's Youth Investment Leadership Forum. The report was released on November 13, 2002.

- ◇ In Washington, DC, there are 9,952 children on waiting lists for childcare.
- ◇ In Ward 3, there are 2,029 children age 0-5 in a household where both parents work.
- ◇ In Ward 3, there are 689 children on waiting lists for childcare. Of these, 166 are infants, 177 are toddlers, and 253 are preschool age (2.5-4), and 93 are pre-Kindergarten age (over 4 years).

Ward 3 parents stand on long lines for hours to try to get their children accepted into a pre-kindergarten classroom at their local public school. The new center that will be built on the Lisner Center/Washington Clinic property will allow the Chevy Chase Plaza Children's Center to increase the number of children served from 31 to 75 babies and young children. This will be a second "campus" so to speak, and will not replace the current center. By increasing its size, something the center has been trying to do for years, but has not been able to do for lack of appropriate, affordable space, the center will be able to realize some economies of scale and improve the quality of service we provide. This is only a drop in the bucket in terms of the overall need for childcare, but it is an extremely worthwhile contribution to the Chevy Chase community and to the city.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

ZONING COMMISSION
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EXHIBIT NO. 187