WILLIAM J. BEERMAN
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October 14, 2003

To: Members of the Zoning Commission
Re: Case 03-21, St. Coletta Planned Unit Development (PUD)

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the proposed St Coletta school on 19th Street SE in DC. I live at 1834 Burke Street SE, about 100 feet from the proposed school site. I am unable to attend your hearing because I will be working.

I attended meetings about the city's plans for the property starting about 2 years ago, and spoke to the city planning director at one of them. I reviewed detailed information provided by St. Coletta's management, and visited St. Coletta's existing school in Alexandria.

I was favorably impressed on my impromptu visit to St. Coletta's in Alexandria. The students seemed to be very happy and enjoying life, and I was touched. To me, their happiness was an indicator that the school was well managed. A St Coletta special education intern I spoke with there was full of praise for the school. A student from Buffalo, NY, she said she and other education majors chose St Coletta's to do their internships because the school has an excellent reputation. She said it was well managed.

The property is very attractive, in keeping with the ambiance of Old Towne Alexandria.

I can't help but conclude St. Coletta School would be an excellent neighbor -- an asset to the neighborhood.

As a former news reporter, I covered many controversies surrounding development proposals, and I have some awareness of the potential pros and cons of developments near neighborhoods. Some arguments I've heard from critics of the St Coletta project do not seem relevant or logical to me. For example, what is wrong with providing land to a school that will serve the DC school system? Forcing St. Coletta to pay for the land would simply increase the cost of educating the students. Is the St. Coletta issue being sensationalized by people with hidden political agendas or aspirations? Some critics who say they are residents live a mile or more away.

As the site stands now, it is usually littered and the weeds are 2 feet high. At least one other proposed use of the site seems very undesirable. I hope to see the property finally put to use for the St. Coletta school, for the benefit of the Washington school system, and for the enhancement of my neighborhood.

Sincerely,

William J Beerman

WILLIAM J. BEERMAN

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
Case 03-21
Exhibit 16

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OFFICE OF ZONING
D.C.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.03-21
EXHIBIT NO.16