



June 12, 2006

Ms. Carol J. Mitten, Chair
 Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
 441 4th Street, NW
 Suite 200 South
 Washington, DC 20001

DC OFFICE OF ZONING

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Dear Ms. Mitten;

We are opposed to the permanent implementation of the emergency set down regulations proposed to amend the treatment of charter schools under the Zoning Regulations.

I'm sure that the Office of Planning attempted to contact the communities that work with charter schools throughout the city, but with an issue as complex and far-reaching as this, we feel certain in stating that the small developer community is not aware of these changes.

While it may be public knowledge in certain professional communities that these proposed amendments have been put forth, they are not public knowledge in the communities where the impact will be most felt.

I think it would be equitable and fair to schedule a second public hearing so that more organizations could be heard before changes such as these are made permanent.

The Non Profit Community Development Corporation has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation ("AppleTree") to provide classroom and community room space for their early language and literacy public charter preschool program at Langston Lane apartments, a 118 unit, 100% Section 8 apartment project located in Ward 8 at Anger and Langston Lane in the Woodland section of the District.

We currently have a development agreement with the tenants and a contract to purchase the property from the Altman companies of Philadelphia. We are waiting on DHCD to complete processing tax credit allocations.

As a major part of our redevelopment program, we are integrating social services into the fabric of the community. To this end, AppleTree's early language and literacy preschool program is the foundation to getting children off to a strong start. We believe that educating three- and four- year old children—on site—is a critical part of our community development strategy.

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EXHIBIT NO. 45

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THE NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C., INC.

At Langston, which is zoned R-5, AppleTree can serve 36 three- and four-year old children in two classrooms, with administrative space, indoor activity space and storage that is designed from current space in that development. Part of the quality of this program is the ratio of adults to children (1:6) in preschool classrooms that are approximately 850 square feet in size. With administrative, activity and storage space for this 36 student program, the total amount of space required by that program is approximately 3,600 square feet.

Unfortunately, under the proposed changes, this self-sustaining small school would fall under the new minimums in this zone of 9,000 square feet. Every additional financial and regulatory burden makes it less likely that quality program of this size will be financially self-sustaining.

From experience, we know that parents with an average income of \$6,000 to \$10,000 need a quality program like this on-site for the full benefits to be achieved. Unfortunately, they will not walk their children to such a program, assuming they could find one of similar quality. While all desire to help their children, they have neither the experience, the support or the money to do so at a site away from where they live.

We are looking at an additional opportunity with AppleTree, where their early language and literacy preschool charter program could easily be built into a community in need of quality early childhood education to support families. At 22nd and Savannah, SE we can envision a larger program that would serve 72 three and four-year old children. The area needed for this program, which is also zoned R-5, is 8,200 square feet. The new regulations will add additional burdens of time and cost, which in projects of this nature can make or break a development.

This concept is so important to changing the nature and structure of these communities that the idea that the zoning commission would want to make it impossible and more difficult to implement is unimaginable.

Based on my prior experience with the zoning commission, I cannot believe that you fully understand the impact of the proposed actions on small, intensive early educational programs that offer an alternative to children otherwise destined to be part of the permanent underclass in this city. This should be unacceptable for any and all of us. While we cannot solve all problems, for all people it seems that we all should have an obligation, first to the youngest and neediest, to be thoughtful in our decision making process.

Sincerely,


Michelle Owens,
Managing Director

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**NPCDC of
Washington, DC**

Fax

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Pages: 3

Phone:

Date: 6/12/06

Re: 06-06 Extension of Emergency

CC:

rulemaking Public Schools

☐ **Urgent**

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