

DC Zoning Commission

Case # 08-06-7

Office of Planning

ZRR: Campus + Institutional



St. Albans School

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

December 22, 2008

Mr. Travis Parker
Development Review Specialist
Office of Planning
801 North Capitol Street, N.W. Suite #4000
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Parker,

Let me weigh in on the proposed changes to the zoning regulations, and in particular, the required campus plan proposal for independent schools. I don't intend to write a long letter and I hope you think my tone will be respectful of the need for your office to serve our city well.

The Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW) is supplying you with some comparative data. I understand that campus plans have been put in place for Georgetown University, George Washington University, and Howard University, to pick three examples. St. Albans School is a veritable dwarf compared to these giants. The universities' enrollments range from 10,000 to 20,000, their employee numbers from 7,500 to 13,000, and their square footage from 6 to 7 million! But it is not simply a question of size differential. We are a local school that serves the people of this city. Our auxiliary interests are minimal, and many of them are actually services we provide to our neighbors. Traffic flows in and out of our campus with ease, and as part of our last process through the BZA, we built a massive new parking garage. We open and close and take vacations and don't exist like a city unto itself, as universities and colleges do. As proud of our efficient school operations as we are, we still don't begin to have the resources universities have in crafting the kind of campus plans that will be required of us under the zoning proposal.

Let the record show that St. Albans School has worked cooperatively with our ANC, the HPRB, and the BZA on a number of significant issues involving our School, including the current Marriott Hall construction project. While none of the meetings have been without serious discussion, and some disagreement, many of the members of our neighborhood would testify that we listen carefully, respond, share information, and work toward agreement. In fact, there are times when we have made modifications to our construction or parking plans because of dialogue from all three official entities. We provide a number of additional services to the neighborhood surrounding our School because of the fine ideas we receive not only from those regulatory bodies, but from the individuals sharing our neighborhood with us. All parties have profited by the system as

ZONING COMM.
District of Columbia

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EXHIBIT NO. 25

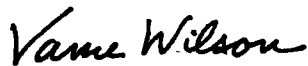
it currently exists and, I would emphasize, as it currently succeeds. We are fearful of a change in a process that is not broken and a change that would bring great expense to our School. None of us are enamored of paying lawyers and consultants for their counsel on campus plans when that money would be better spent on the education we provide.

I often talk about the public obligations of private institutions. At St. Albans, we teach our students to believe that they have an obligation to serve in whatever communities they live in for the rest of the lives. We are such believers in the role of public service in one's life, we, as a private school, founded a School for Public Service six years ago, a program that gathers public school students from around the country and introduces them to the importance of public service in Washington, D.C. We also host the Cathedral Scholars program for outstanding public high school students who live in town. We provide financial aid to our current students from the city (25% of our boys are on aid).

All of us in the business of education are trying to determine the best ways to tighten our budgets and try to make education affordable for everyone, either by having a tuition that the professional classes can afford, or awarding financial aid to any young man capable of doing the work.

The current process works. It represents the needs of both the institutions and the neighborhoods. It is good, sound public policy. I hope we will not face additional requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vance Wilson".

Vance Wilson
Headmaster