

February 6, 2018

Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001
Re: Supports for Zoning Commission Case No. 17-20

Dear Members of the Commission:

We are writing in support of the proposed text amendment known as Zoning Commission Case No. 17-20. We are parents of a young child in DC and have had firsthand experience with the difficulty of finding convenient, quality, and affordable childcare. Also, as parents of a child at Petit Scholars in Brookland, DC, we are familiar with the cost and the affect that zoning restrictions have on childcare centers and the working parents that rely on them. These difficulties have a ripple effect on local businesses and workplaces that employ the affected parents.

We moved to Brookland from Dakar, Senegal when Amanda's employer relocated her to their headquarters office in DC. The stress and adaptation of moving was especially difficult for our child. We were excited when, after an exhaustive search in both our new neighborhood and near Amanda's office, we were able to find *one* daycare that had space for our child – Petit Scholars RIA. You can imagine our excitement when we found out that Petit Scholars RIA not only had space for our child, but offered an enriching program with highly trained staff and had great rapport in the neighborhood. We were planning to enroll at Petit Scholars RIA for their originally scheduled opening date. However, because of the zoning difficulties, Petit Scholars RIA was unable to begin their program for several months. We were forced to take unplanned vacation time from work, enlist the help of family members from out of state (who also had to take unplanned vacation time from work), and temporarily hire a private in-home child care provider, stretching our childcare budget, to cover the time before Petit Scholars RIA was allowed to open. This further exacerbated the stress of our transition to a new community. Fortunately, once Petit Scholars RIA was able to open, the staff were completely in tune with our child's needs and the sensitivity required to comfortably transition a toddler to a new care environment. We couldn't have been more thankful for the leadership, skills, and expertise that the caregivers at Petit Scholars exercised during our great time of need. We just wish that senseless regulations did not prevent trusted, high-quality care providers such as Petit Scholars from providing services that are desperately needed for working DC families.

LaShada's focus is always on the children. Her efforts in this community are commendable and should be supported, given the child-care crisis the district currently finds itself in. We therefore urge the Commission to expeditiously approve the proposed corrections and reinstate the permitted use for childcare centers.

We are available by email (amanda.zongrone@gmail.com and bryans43@gmail.com) if you would like further comments or have any questions about our statement.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amanda Zongrone and Mr. Bryan Sobel
Ward 5