

October 21, 2021

To: Board of Zoning Adjustment
From: Ruth Wimer

Re: Case #20472

I write to express opposition to the proposed zoning exemptions requested by the River School with respect to its proposed relocation to 4220 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.

My husband and I own and live in the residence at 4200 42nd Street, NW, Washington, DC. Our property is directly across from the lot known as the Buchanan Estate which the River School wishes to occupy and on which there is currently a single residence.

Our ANC is opposing the zoning exemptions mainly due to serious and significant traffic concerns. DDOT appears not to have opposed nor strongly support the River School proposal and it clearly has not given the traffic issue the time and consideration it deserves.

As the Zoning Board is aware, the problem with the River School's proposed new location is that it would be attempting to assemble far more than 400 individuals every day on property just over two acres in size intended for a single residence. The surrounding Tenleytown neighborhood is already at the traffic breaking point with public and private schools, and the River School is simply not a good fit and certainly not necessary.

In short, the residential property that the River School would like to purchase is too small, the traffic and safety issues in the surrounding area already are too extreme, so that it is imprudent to approve any project with such a large number of people, cars, and traffic, unless and until the underlying causes of the traffic and safety issues are adequately addressed.

The 2.27 acre property at 4220 Nebraska Ave, NW is zoned R-1-B, as residential property in a residential zone. While the school proposal would not be permitted

under normal circumstances, a school is allowed to apply for exemptions if the proposed use did not cause significant detriment to the neighborhood.

I would submit that it is apparent on its face that the Tenleytown Neighborhood would suffer significant detriment. 450 individuals coming and going from the tiny lot would cause excessive noise, traffic, disruption, and strain on the infrastructure. While details of the River School plans are difficult to obtain, it calls for roughly 60,000 square feet of development. The property is approximately 2.27 acres in size, meaning the River School proposal would yield a density of .61 FAR, a density greater than any comparable private school located in the District of Columbia, except perhaps one (Edmund Burke).

Adding to our concerns is that the River School's BZA application for zoning exception does not include any discussion of the National Center for Hearing Innovation or the "clinic". The proposed clinic would have approximately either 9,300 or 14,000 square feet, including an institute with researchers, training staff and visitors. Please note that this is apparently not a school or child-care related activity and thus should have been included as an additional zoning exception request.

The River School acknowledges the looming traffic problem. It does not currently have adequate funding to support this project without causing a severe detrimental effect on the neighborhood. Any promises or neighborhood concessions it makes cannot be guaranteed as its funding is contingent upon hoped-for fundraising.

We beseech you to not approve BZA Case # 20472.

Respectfully,

Ruth Wimer
4200 42nd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20016