



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
Box 75115
Washington, DC 20013



October 2, 2007

Public Charter School Board
3333 14th Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20010

Dear Board Members:

At our regularly scheduled meeting on September 13, 2007, we voted unanimously to ask the Public Charter School Board to abide by the current regulations of the District of Columbia in siting new and expansion charter schools.

The Zoning Commission has promulgated two changes to the zoning regulations governing the siting of public schools in residential neighborhoods (ZC Orders 06-06 and 07-03). The new requirements specify minimum lot size (9,000 sq. ft. in duplex and rowhouse neighborhoods), the number of street frontage parking slots to be required (six), the number of parking spots for staff, and a required minimal length of street frontage (120 feet).

At its hearing of March 19, 2007, the Tri-Community Public Charter School came before the PCSB for review of its status of "charter warning". As part of that review Chair Tom Nida proposed expansion of the school into a nearby residential property. Mr. Nida had been part of the Zoning Commission charter school hearings and the subsequent briefings by the Office of Planning. At the PCSB meeting of July 16, 2007, Mr. Tom Nida advised the local ANC, Brookland residents and concerned citizens to direct concerns regarding zoning, traffic, fire, health and safety issues to the other entities of the government. This is the same response ANC 6A earlier received regarding the proposed location of AppleTree PCS.

We believe strongly that the PCSB should ensure by its own investigation whether or not a particular proposed school site meets current regulations. There should be no possibility that a failure by the City's inspectors or a change of building use without notice to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs could result in the inappropriate location of a school. The PCSB should not simply say that health, safety, and legality of a school site selection are not its problem. A simple bright-line checklist can easily be developed and used by your staff. We urge you to do so.

In summary, ANC 6A requests that the PCSB honor the city's laws and regulations, and publicly state that no charter school shall be permitted to site a new charter or an expansion campus in violation of the District of Columbia regulations. Please contact either Commissioner David Holmes (251-7079) or Commissioner Nicholas Alberti (543-3512), if you have further questions.

On behalf of the Commission

Joseph Fengler, Chair