



City of Wilmington

Hanifa G.N. Shabazz
City Council Member, 4th District

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March 5, 2015

Mr. David Blowman
Deputy Secretary
Chair, Charter School Advisory Committee
Delaware Department of Education
Dover, Delaware

Dear Mr. Blowman:

I am not able to attend the March 9 meeting of your committee as it accepts public comments regarding the Friere School. I am requesting that the enclosed letter I wrote to the Concerned Residents of the Midtown Brandywine Neighborhood be read into the record at the March 9 meeting and be accepted by your committee as my views concerning the Friere matter.

Thank you in advance for honoring my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hanifa Shabazz".

Dr. Hanifa Shabazz
Council Member, 4th District

Committee Chair
Public Works & Transportation

Committee Member
Education, Youth & Families
Finance
Housing, Licenses & Inspections

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425 Bradford Street
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March 4, 2015

Concerned Residents of the Midtown Brandywine Neighborhood
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Dear Friends:

I appreciate your request for me to attend the March 9 meeting of the Charter School Advisory Committee. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend as I will be away from March 7 through 12 for a conference. However, your concerns are my concerns and I am pleased to be able to support your position with regard to a school being established in your neighborhood.

Our concerns are not about the school itself, but are about the location of the school. I have always known the Midtown Brandywine community to be comprised of welcoming, caring and tolerant people. I still know that to be true today. I agree with your collective assessment that a school of this size placed in such a densely populated and compact area will be detrimental to both the school and the community.

One of the important community benefits of any type of a school or learning facility being established in close proximity to neighborhoods is that its students and faculty become part of the community and contribute to its growth and prosperity. I doubt in this case that any of the intended or hoped for benefits by either the school or the community will come to fruition. There is a clear clash of values that is deep and could unintentionally place the children in an unwelcoming environment or situation to which none of us should contribute.

I also have deep concerns about the proposed traffic flow plan associated with this school and especially about a portion of the plan for dropping off or picking up children which I feel could interfere with existing businesses on Market Street. This is not acceptable. I also have deep concerns about the availability of staff and student parking. Part of that plan apparently involves excess parking somewhere at the nearby Christina Care site which indicates that the parking issue will become more of a concern as the school reaches its maximum population.

Committee Chair
Public Works & Transportation

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The majority of constituents in this area have made their positions very clear. I feel they have acted in a thoughtful manner. This school proposal will simply not work and should not be pursued. I would hope that the officials of this school accept the will of the people and seek a school location that is more conducive to the support and the amenities needed to produce a successful program for the children.

Finally, I am supporting the efforts of our City Council President Theo Gregory to identify a legislatively mandated mechanism by which the City has the authority to approve the location of any school in Wilmington. I am confident that this effort could address the perplexing habit by the State of imposing its will regarding education on the City without regard to neighborhood planning issues or the opinions of our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Hanifa Shabazz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "H".

Dr. Hanifa Shabazz