

February 17, 2025

Subject: Opposition Conditional Use Zoning Violations at 17734 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring.

Dear Hearing Examiner Khandikile Mvunga Sokoni and Board Members:

My name is Stephen Schertler, and I (along with my wife Laura) reside at 17730 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring, MD. Our home is directly adjacent to the property at 17734 Norwood Road.

We strongly oppose the applicant's request for a CUA for 17734 Norwood Road. This property has a long history of being what can only be considered a community nuisance property. The property owner has consistently violated numerous housing and safety codes and has been a persistent problem in the 12 years we have lived in the community. The current property owner has done little to maintain the property and comply with the required ordinances for rental properties in Montgomery County.

The property owner has repeatedly violated requirements in the following ways:

1. **[Violation 1 - No special events can be held at the facilities premises]:** Frequency of violation is weekends primarily during the spring and summer, and noise complaints are on record with Montgomery County Police Dept. Photos in the Appendix A.
2. **[Violation 2 - Residents are not permitted to park personal vehicles on-site]:** Frequency of violation is on a daily basis. A multitude of photographic and personal testaments are available to document this. Photos in Appendix A.
3. **Violation 3 – Landscaping must be maintained in accordance with the landscape Plan included in the accord:** Frequency of violation chronic and regular weekly. Overflow vehicles are parked directly on the lawn and not on paved surfaces. The lawn is killed and browned out on those areas. Photos in Appendix A
4. **Violation 4 - Any material change to the operational characteristics of this use as testified to on the record are subject to the modification provisions contained within the zoning ordinance.]:** Frequency of violation daily and ongoing since the property owner executed a lease on the property to multi-family tenants. People who approached the property looking for an educational facility were ignored, and these people commented that the trash was full of empty alcoholic beverage bottles.
5. **Violation 5:** Property falsely being advertised as *Highland International School* and does not operate as such. A contemporaneous excerpt below is from an email of an experience that took place between Stephen and a lady who came to our home:

"A few weeks ago, a lady rang my doorbell and asked if I knew anything about the Highland International Education School. I told her I had no idea what that was. And she responded, "well you live next door to it" (Aunt Hatties place). She and her daughter had tried to stop by to the School see about internships and she told me no one answered the door although, she could see people walking around inside.

I looked at Google Maps and sure enough it is called Highland International Education and has a website <https://www.hieusa.org/>. I would assume that it must be chartered in Montgomery County or Maryland to use that name. Maybe the Montgomery County School District Knows more."

Note: These are violations that are indisputable. The County has documented other violations, such as inadequate trash handling are chronic.

These violations have been ongoing despite previous attempts to address some of the issues. Noise complaints are on record. The County has been and has documented violations.

The impacts of these violations on the community include but are not limited to:

- **[Decreased property value1]:** [reduced property values, increased traffic, safety hazards, etc.]
- **[Community identity and quality of life]:** [disruption of peace and quiet, environmental concerns, etc.]
- **[Community resources and general stress]:** [why does the community need to continue requesting basic enforcements. It is emotionally and physically a strain on community resources]

We are requesting OZAH take immediate and appropriate action to investigate and resolve these ongoing violations. Ensuring compliance with zoning regulations is essential to maintaining the integrity and livability of a community.

We look forward to supporting this request if further information or documentation is required to assist with your investigation. I am happy to provide additional details or attend a meeting to discuss this matter further to determine if a suitable resolution can be reached.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and I trust the zoning board will take swift action to uphold the zoning ordinances and protect the interests of our community.

Sincerely,

Stephen & Laura Schertler
17730 Norwood Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

APPENDIX





