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VIA EMAIL: rjgeary@mac.com

Mr. Robert Geary

Dear Bob:

As you are aware, I have been working with Stan Norwalk trying to understand current issues concerning the school system and proposed public/private partnerships. As I said at the WakeUp meeting, I feel very strongly that a good system of public education is vital to the health of the community. I also agree with what I understand to be the position of the WakeUp Board. I think that the lack of financing for the schools places us on a collision course with a disastrous situation. If something is not done it does not appear to be unreasonable to predict a future when only the wealthy who can afford private schools are able to properly educate their children. I would like very much like to work with WakeUp in avoiding this.

Your views on active recreation is, however, a matter that concerns me a great deal. I have been reluctant to speak up on this issue because of my wife's position. Since she is no longer Chair of the Parks Board and the matter is before the Council, I now feel less constrained.

Over thirty years ago I served on the master planning committee for Millbrook Exchange Park. That committee never imagined that we were planning a park that would have to meet the active needs of that section of the City well into the first quarter of the twenty-first century. When I served on the City Council I actively worked for the development of the greenway program and served as the Council's liaison to the Parks Board and worked hard to make sure that the City carried out its responsibilities for providing recreational facilities to the community. It was my hope that future Councils would continue this process and that Raleigh would not follow the pattern of so many other rapidly developing southern cities.

I have paid close attention to the debate that has gone on for many months about Horseshoe Farms and other park sites. I fear that this debate has become so acrimonious that the needs of the community are being ignored. Rather than an intelligent and well-intentioned debate, it appears that the voice of dissent is being shouted down and winning has become the goal. People expressing certain views seem to be shouted out of the process entirely. I respectfully submit that a case can be made that the current view that classifies itself as the

Mr. Robert Geary
Page 2
September 27, 2006

“environmental” side is the concomitant of the position of those that oppose any tax increase, user fees, school bonds or other constructive approach to dealing with the educational crisis.

I hope that you will carefully consider the points that I am trying to raise. A confrontational, take no prisoners approach guarantees that there will be a winner and a loser, whether it be in the arena of schools, parks or many other issues needing careful attention. Perhaps even more importantly, it ensures that WakeUp will be nothing more than predecessor organizations and controlling the process will supersede the public interest. I look forward to the possibility of discussing this issue with you in more detail at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

KIRSCHBAUM, NANNEY, KEENAN & GRIFFIN, P.A.

Ronald I. Kirschbaum

RIK:ssw

cc: Mr. Stan Norwalk (via email)
Mr. Bob Mulder (via email)