

March 5, 2008

Residents of the block of 200 W. Haines Street
c/o Andre Harris
254 W. Haines Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Mr. Vernon Price
12 District Councilman Office
Room 312 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Mr. Price,

As you suggested to Katey McGrath during a conversation with her on February 28, 2008, we are sending you this letter to officially file our strong opposition to the construction and operation of a residential treatment and care facility by The Association for Independent Growth, Inc. (TAIG) at 253 W. Haines Street. As a block, we are opposed to TAIG's plans to operate such a facility on Haines Street because we believe it will place an undue burden upon the current residents of the street and adversely affect our quality of life.

TAIG intends to build a 24-hour care facility for mentally retarded individuals that would be prominently located in the middle of our residential block. Based on the conduct of TAIG to date, we have serious concerns about how the corporation would operate this facility and respond to issues raised by the surrounding community. For example, TAIG purchased the property on August 7, 2007. Not a single resident of our block was notified by TAIG of their construction and operation plans. No dialog with the corporation began until we searched the property records to learn the identity of the new property owner and contacted TAIG on February 14, 2007 to request a meeting. We find it extremely disconcerting that a non-profit organization would not approach the current residents of the street prior to building and operating such a facility knowing the impact such an operation would have on the residents' homes and lives. Since the initial meeting with TAIG, what little communication and response we have received from the corporation has been far less than acceptable.

While we recognize and appreciate the service that TAIG provides to the Philadelphia community at-large, we believe that such a facility places an undue burden on the current residents. There is already an existing state licensed personal care boarding home located on the corner of Haines Street and Wayne Avenue. The Kaysim Court Manor facility is licensed to provide care to over 81 individuals according to Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. The behavior of both the staff and occupants of this facility are a constant source of concern for residents of our block with issues ranging from lewd public exposure to public urination to noise to the maintenance of property. We fear that

the addition of a second care facility, even if operated under the best circumstances, will place additional strain and stress on our community and only magnify the pre-existing quality of life issues.

Attached is a detailed list of our quality of life issues, concerns over the logistics of TAIG's planned facility, and documentation of our correspondence with TAIG to date.

The 200 W. block of Haines Street is a diverse, close-knit community. Its residents pride themselves on being good neighbors and have worked hard to maintain a safe and strong community for decades. Again, while we recognize the need for the services provided by TAIG, we do not believe that the corporation is interested in becoming a part of our community nor constructing and operating their facility in a mutually beneficial manner. Given that we are already distressed by the operation of an existing residential treatment and care facility on Haines Street, we believe that TAIG should not be permitted to construct and operate a second facility in a highly visible location in the middle of our community.

Because TAIG intends to begin construction within a few days, we would sincerely appreciate your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and thank you in advance for any guidance and assistance you can provide to us.

Please direct future correspondence to either:

Andre Harris
254 W. Haines St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144
Cell: (215) 668-6615

Katey McGrath
250 W. Haines St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144
Cell: (215) 292-1630

Sincerely,
Residents of the block of 200 W. Haines Street
(Signatures attached)

cc: Councilman William K. Greenlee
cc: The Germantown Courier
cc: Zoning Board of Adjustment, Department of Licenses and Inspections

Documentation of Concerns

- Complete lack of communication from TAIG regarding their plans for the property in advance.
- Undue burden placed on the residents of Haines Street caused by the operation of a second residential treatment and care facility
- Adverse impact on quality of life from operation of a 24-hour residential treatment and care facility located in the middle of our residential block. Examples include increased traffic on a small residential street, parking, and potential noise at all times of day and night.
- TAIG's site plans indicate that they will constructing a 18' x 35' parking lot in front of the facility. We believe that this may violate the zoning code for the property. In addition, the construction of such a parking lot, if not the entire facility, may violate the environmental controls for the Wissahickon Watershed (see section 14-1603.2 of the Philadelphia Code and Charter).
- TAIG's facility designed to be a handicapped accessible facility yet the site plans do not show a handicapped ramp which would be necessary to access the facility. Code requires that a ramp have an incline of ¼" vertical per 1'0" horizontal. The grade above the sidewalk measures 28". This means that TAIG's site plans should include 112' of ramp to be code compliant. The plans that were shown to us on March 5, 2008 do not include such a ramp.
- TAIG is a city-funded organization and we learned from TAIG's contractor on March 5, 2008 that they are using non-union labor to construct the facility. Given that we were already concerned about the quality of the construction, this fact is particularly disheartening.
- Haines Street is a narrow, one-way street. The street width is 23.5" with parking on both sides. TAIG plans to construct off-street parking for the facility with the intention of loading and unloading disabled residents of the facility in the driveway. Realistically, an oversized van would struggle to turn into such a driveway given the dimensions of the street unless TAIG blocked at least three parking spaces. Parking at night is often an issue for current residents of Haines Street and this would only worsen the situation.
- Architectural design of the facility TAIG intends to construct does not even attempt to reflect the historical architectural styles of the surrounding residences. The construction of the facility also calls for the partial or complete removal of a stone wall that is over one hundred years old.

Documentation of Concerns (continued)

- Initial clearing of vegetation from 253 Haines Street by contractors hired by TAIG resulted in the telephone of 257 Haines Street being severed on February 21, 2008. Despite being informed of this, TAIG has yet to resolve this.
- Contractors hired by TAIG erected a fence in front of the property that extended into the street. Neither TAIG nor the contractors had a permit to erect such a fence so this was done illegally. We have been notified that the fence will be erected again the week of March 10, 2008 but have yet to proof of a permit to block parking.
- Since TAIG purchased the property in August 2007, the corporation has made no attempt to maintain the property (i.e., snow removal, trash, etc.) other than preparing it for construction beginning in February. Additionally, serious issues with the retaining wall between the property and 251 Haines Street have not been addressed nor responded to.
- Should TAIG be permitted to proceed with their construction and operation plans, we are concerned about the fate of the extremely low-quality residence if TAIG were to cease to operate it in the future.

Documentation of Communication with TAIG to Date

- Summer 2007
The real estate agent of the seller was informed of the issues with the retaining wall bordering 253 W. Haines.
- February 14, 2008
Contractors cleared property of vegetation and accidentally cut the telephone line of 257 W. Haines Street. Contacted TAIG and requested a meeting to discuss their plans for the property.
- February 19, 2008
Contacted TAIG a second time to request a meeting. Meeting was scheduled for February 27.
- February 27, 2008
Met with TAIG representatives. TAIG stated they would give a site plan and construction schedule. As of the writing of this letter, neither has been delivered.
- February 27, 2008
Contractors hired by TAIG erected a fence that extended into the street. This fence was erected without a permit. Councilman William Greenlee's office contacted TAIG who agreed to move the illegally placed fence.

Documentation of Communication with TAIG to Date (continued)

- February 28, 2008
TAIG representative Deborah Briscoe was contacted by our neighbor, Katey McGrath, and Ms. Briscoe again stated that the fence would be moved by the next business day.
- February 29, 2008
Ms. McGrath again contacted Ms. Briscoe and was notified that the contractors would move the fence by the end of the day (note: this fact is disputed by Ms. Briscoe) but that the fence would need to be erected again by the beginning of the following week.

The illegally erected fence was not dismantled and removed from the street by the end of the day despite Ms. Briscoe's assurances that it would be.

- March 1, 2008
TAIG contractors arrived on site to discover that the fence had been dismantled and placed into the lot itself. Ms. Briscoe called Ms. McGrath to express her displeasure at "going against [their] agreement". Please note that Ms. McGrath did not move the fence nor are we aware of who did.
- March 5, 2008
Meet with TAIG's project manager (construction) to discuss details of construction. We were shown a copy of the site plan but were not allowed to keep it even though it was a blue print. This TAIG representative was also unable to provide us with a building schedule stating that he did not have one himself. He also stated that unless the ground was frozen, construction would begin the week of March 10.