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November 21, 2013

The Honorable Lee Leffingwell, Mayor, City of Austin
Honorable Members of the City of Austin City Council

Re: Zoning Case C-14-2013-0060 – Bluff Springs Food Mart

Dear Mayor Leffingwell and Council Members,

I represent Langford Elementary School and the community of Dove Springs on the Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees. In addition to the social and socioeconomic challenges faced by the residents of Dove Springs, various schools in the Dove Springs community continue to be challenged by such issues as lower rates of student attendance and higher rates of unexcused absences, both of which affect the academic outcomes of the students of Dove Springs.

While I try not to intervene in the zoning cases that come before you, I write to share my concerns related to zoning case C-14-2013-0060.

The long-term effects of the proposed Bluff Springs Food Mart on the students and families of Langford Elementary School could be much more devastating than even the recent flood which ravaged their community. Though farther than 1,000 feet from the school, the proposed business is located at an intersection with heavy student traffic, where our AISD crossing signs are posted.

I have met with the owner of the property, as well as with various community members who will be impacted by the proposed business. During our lengthy encounter, the owner seemed willing to work with concerned parents and community members. I was subsequently told that he is unwilling to address many of their concerns.

The community is rightly concerned that the proposed business will sell alcohol and unhealthy foods. Equally troubling, though, is the fact that the owner has other businesses in Austin that sell such items as pipes that are used to smoke illegal drugs.

I thank you in advance for considering the merits of the case presented to you by the community of Dove Springs, and I thank you for your concern for the students and families of Langford Elementary School. I greatly appreciate your efforts to enhance the health and well-being of all the community members that we are elected to represent.

Sincerely,

Hon. Rev. Dr. Jayme Mathias
Board Secretary & District 2 Trustee

JM/mw/eh