

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Thomas Martella <tjmartella@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 12:01 PM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Tom Martella
Subject: BZA Application No. 20643: Maret School Athletic Fields Project

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The plan Maret has proposed for the grounds at the Episcopal Center for Children (ECC) has two quite positive objectives. One is helping the ECC with funding to stay in its existence, serving a student population both in need and, sadly, too often ignored. The second is providing wonderful, natural space for outdoor activity for so many youths in DC. Maret will use the area for athletic competition, but only in daylight hours, benefitting boys and girls from its and its competitor schools' programs with safe, beautiful grounds. And kids from other schools and programs also will have access to the space outside of Maret's use, in a city which, frankly, could use more natural, open-air areas encouraging all types of play.

We here in Chevy Chase DC can see Lafayette Park, its playground, and its tennis courts, from our front door. And it frankly is delightful for us to see and hear kids, with or without their parents, enjoying the outdoor spaces from early morning and throughout the day, in all seasons. They are a wonderful part of our community, enhancing our existence as they play. Indeed, it is a wonderful measure of true community that they are here, and want to be!

Unfortunately, those sentiments have not come to light in the press reporting of the situation, and moreover, not forcefully enough in the general discussion. Isn't the Episcopal school's mission sustainment important, for children who need that kind of support? And isn't focusing on getting kids outdoors, in sports and activities in general, away from their devices, a useful objective? Becoming open, enthusiastic participants in community life?

Basically, two very positive outcomes can occur with the proposed partnership. And, by the way, let's not forget that we are not talking about potential alternatives — obnoxious high rises or commercial enterprises in this delightfully residential space.

I hope you will support Maret's plan in light of its positive outcomes — obvious benefits to ECC, and also, to many others — much like what we have experienced with the fun and enthusiasm generated by our nearby park. More not less use of outdoor spaces makes total sense.

Sincerely,

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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.20643
EXHIBIT NO.117