

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Peter Hakim <peter@thedialogue.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 8:51 PM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Subject: BZA Application No. 20643: Maret School Athletic Fields Project"

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Dear Chairman Frederick Hill:

I am writing to offer my comments of support for Maret School's plans to build an athletic facility in Chevy Chase, DC. What triggered this letter were reports about the protests and complaints coming from neighborhood residents opposed to Maret's plans. My wife and I thought it would be helpful for you to hear from us about our experience with another Maret athletic facility--this one in Woodley Park, directly across the street from our house, maybe a hundred feet from our front door.

In our 24 years living in the shadow of Maret's athletic facility, neither my wife nor I have ever been annoyed, bothered, or even seriously distracted by the cheers, jeers, shouts, and multiple other noises emerging from the youngsters or their classmates parents, coaches, and fans. To the contrary, we relished the sounds, as well as the diversity of the players and teams--younger and older, boys and girls, men and women, Maret students, and visitors from public and private schools throughout the DC area. Never in my recollection was there a traffic or parking problems.

It is hard for us to understand why neighbors would seriously object to an athletic facility that has the potential of providing so much to so many, while creating so little cost, risk, or annoyance to anyone else. And, as it has for us, the Maret facility might offer Chevy Chase residents opportunities to get some needed exercise and real enjoyment. The athletic field, in short, is a tremendous asset in a highly diverse city with too few playgrounds.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.20643
EXHIBIT NO.122

We recall the loud objections from some to Maret's plans to expand and upgrade its sports facilities in Woodley Park some 20 years ago. The main concern, I understand, was the fear that the facilities would be opened to outsiders who were neither students, faculty, or neighbors. And the fact is that Maret was committed to giving others, mostly less privileged than its own neighbors and student body, opportunities to use its facilities, and it has made its athletic field accessible to schools and teams from other neighborhoods in the District and beyond. But this, again, was never a problem for long-term residents like my wife and me. We are proud to have visitors from across the city, speaking Spanish and other languages and enjoying themselves on Maret's first class facilities--which remain in terribly short supply in most of DC's neighborhoods.

During my presentation at an earlier ANC meeting, several participants expressed concerns about the potential loss of trees. They should be reassured. There are now more trees surrounding Maret than there were before the expansion of athletic facilities in Woodley Park.

Please let us know if you would like us to provide any further information about our experience with Maret's athletic field in our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

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