

## Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

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**From:** Ian Cameron <ianocam61@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 3, 2022 12:46 PM  
**To:** DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)  
**Cc:** Speck, Randy (SMD 3G03); Higgins, John (SMD 3G02)  
**Subject:** BZA Application No. 20643: Maret School Athletic Fields Project

To: Chairman Frederick L Hill  
Comments in Support of BZA Application No. 20643

From: Ian Cameron  
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Dear Chairman Hill,

As President of the Maret Board of Trustees and a resident of the District of Columbia, I write in support of Maret's BZA Application No 20643. Maret's partnership with the Episcopal Center for Children to build athletic fields would meet Maret's long-term need for its athletic program. I would like, however, to address the overall need for additional recreation space in the District of Columbia, particularly in Northwest DC and in Ward 4. The fact is, **there remains a lack of regulation-sized fields in Northwest DC and the ECC field is one of the last opportunities to fill that void.** Therefore, I recommend the BZA approve the field and allow non-Maret use of the field under the reasonable schedules per the Maret application.

**If approved by the BZA, the new field will serve as a public benefit for DC residents.** In 2020, the Department of Parks and Recreation conducted Ready2Play, a citywide survey on use of parks and recreation facilities. The [survey](#)\* reported results by ward. According to the survey, the most visited parks in Ward 4 were Takoma Park Rec Center, Upshur Park, Petworth Park, and Hamilton Park. All offer multipurpose fields and are east of Rock Creek Park. **Ward 4 needs more recreation offerings west of the park.** Since DPR faces budget and space constraints, school field facilities can provide a useful public recreational benefit.

Among Ward 4 residents, the survey found that 70% of residents used national parks, 62% used DPR facilities, **42% used schools**, 40% used facilities outside of DC, 39% used private in home facilities, 31% used private gyms, 11% community institutions, organizations. Therefore, **school facilities are an important source for park and recreation activity use in Ward 4.** The Ready to Play Survey of Ward 4 residents identified barriers to accessing DPR facilities. Barriers included lack of access, quality, safety, and programs filling up too quickly. While 37% of Ward 4 residents reported programs filling up too quickly as the biggest barrier to using DPR facilities, 27% said lack of desired amenities was the biggest barrier. Therefore, lack of amenities is a major reason why Ward 4 residents can't use recreational facilities.

This is significant: [Q19](#) asked: "Are there any vacant lots/underutilized land that you would like to see re-purposed for recreational use in your ward. This required respondents to volunteer a location and suggest a use. The most often cited location was the ECC land which is the subject of this zoning application. Here are some of the comments that respondents volunteered:

"this would be an ideal location for additional recreational facilities"

"Look to accessing Episcopal Center for Children in Ward 4 to use as a soccer field."

"Would be great recreation area and place for programming."

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
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“ECC should be purchased and used for recreation as well as additional educational overflow.”

“ECC” (no description of general improvements).

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**The land at ECC was the ONLY location in an area bounded by Western Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and Oregon Avenue that was identified by respondents as a location to repurpose for recreational use.** In fact, besides Fort Reno, it was the only space suggested as a location for significant upgraded recreational facilities.

It’s clear that the Maret BZA application is a unique opportunity to provide DC residents, specifically our younger residents, much needed space for recreational purposes. This project will benefit residents not only in close proximity to the fields but those living in Ward 3 and Ward 4.

I encourage the BZA to approve Application 20643.

Sincerely,

Ian Cameron