

February 13, 2022

Board of Zoning Adjustment  
Washington DC

**Re: Comments In Support of BZA Application No. 20643: Maret School Athletic Fields Project**

Dear Board Members,

I am on the Board of Directors of The Episcopal Center for Children, a 128-year-old, DC based, nonpublic school serving children experiencing emotional disturbances, mood disorders, oppositional defiance, and other specific learning disabilities. We have been addressing these special needs of DC's children and their families since the 1950s.

In 2019 we made the very painful decision to suspend our educational and therapeutic services because our operating expenses could not be matched by our per-student compensation from District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

Since that time the ECC Board and core staff have been diligently searching for the means to supplement our income to re-open our doors for our very special children. After careful analysis we determined that leasing a portion of our unused land would provide the dependable income needed to be operationally self-sufficient.

Among the many inquiries to lease part of our property, some of them very lucrative, we determined the lowest impact, and most educationally beneficial option was to enter into a long-term lease with The Maret School. Recognizing the sensitivity of our neighborhood, with which we identify with as a neighbor too, we specifically prohibited, in our signed land lease with Maret, that there be no night games with artificial lighting, no public address system, and no subleasing of any off-street parking for non-athletic events.

Having worked with the very professional staff of Maret, we now realize that the shared values and neighborhood-friendly approach of both our schools has underscored a perfect match.

Finally, we believe that two certainties exist for ECC: we will not be deterred from finding a stable and secure way to re-open our doors; and it is inescapable that our open fields will not remain vacant forever as we pursue our mission. Currently all DCPS children requiring our special educational and therapeutic services are being bussed outside the District of Columbia. Reopening our doors will help stop this exodus.

Sincerely,

Philip L. Collyer

cc: Stephanie Nash, ECC President and CEO