

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Andrew Wise <atwise@icloud.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 19, 2022 8:05 AM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Speck, Randy (SMD 3G03); Higgins, John (SMD 3G02)
Subject: BZA Application No. 20643: Maret School Athletic Fields Project

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Chairman Hill: I write in strong support of Maret's proposed fields at ECC. I have lived near the project site for 25 years, have raised three kids who have attended Lafayette, Deal, Sidwell, and Maret and have participated in youth sports through Stoddart soccer, Cap City baseball, and Jelleff rec leagues, and have coached in rec leagues and served on volunteer boards of those leagues. In my view, the proposed project would be a valuable addition to the community and would provide a great resource to the neighborhood. Maret has proven to be a great neighbor and conscientious community partner and the process with regard to these fields has proven that yet again. The project itself would greatly benefit ECC and would preserve that property for productive and positive use. The site design changes and landscape elements more than adequately addressed concerns raised by various neighbors and the traffic plans will mitigate any potential impacts on the rare occasions that an event at the fields draws meaningful attention.

The details of the plan have been detailed in Maret's submissions and discussed at previous meetings, and I will not waste your time repeating them here. I do think it valuable to recall the discussions around the renovation and use of the athletic fields at Lafayette. Many of the same arguments about traffic, noise, and congestion were raised about fixing of those fields, and proved to be wildly exaggerated and inaccurate. As a neighbor who lives one block away, I have had a first-hand view of the impact, which has been minimal, and greatly outweighed by the positive impact of kids participating in sports and being outside. But because the project was not executed with the level of foresight and planning that Maret has invested here, the fields themselves are already in some level of disrepair and are not standing up to the level of use that was anticipated. The application you are presently considering appears to provide a first-quality, sustainable plan that will benefit kids and the larger community for years to come.

I am not surprised that some around the site are concerned about the impact of the project, but I do think that a fair reading of the materials provided describing the project address those concerns. Obviously there will be benefits to Maret and its students, but there are also clear benefits to the ECC and to the youth sports population in the city more generally. If the land is not used for this purpose, it is not hard to imagine a near-term use for higher density and/or more vertical development. I take neighbors at their word that they would rather have no change in the present state of the land, but it seems clear that the alternative to the Maret plan is more disruptive.

Thank you for your attention to this submission and your thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Regards,
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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.20643
EXHIBIT NO.195