

March 2, 2022

Chairman Frederick Hill

Re: Board of Zoning Adjustment Case #20643: Maret School

Dear Chairman Hill,

I am writing to tell you that I oppose Maret School's plan to construct a multi-sports complex on the grounds of the Episcopal Center for Children (ECC). My children attended private high school in DC at a time when their school constructed a much-needed addition, and so I am sympathetic to the need for the city's private schools to sometimes expand their facilities. However, I also understand that schools must be responsible for working closely with their neighbors to address their concerns about these critical projects. I am very troubled by the many negative impacts that Maret's sports complex will have on the neighbors whose properties abut the proposed complex, the surrounding Chevy Chase DC community, and the city's environment. And I am very concerned that Maret is not seriously listening to the community and responding to their concerns.

As a retired environmental consultant, I would like to speak to some of the adverse environmental impacts that this project will create. The existing ECC field is home to many trees, which provide numerous benefits including removing carbon dioxide and other pollutants from the air, helping to reduce and filter rainwater runoff, and providing a natural and beautiful barrier between the field and ECC's neighbors. Maret's plan to remove 40 or more trees from the property – including the large trees around the edges of the property – will adversely impact all these benefits. The DC Department of Energy & Environment (DDOE) is actively working to manage stormwater runoff throughout the city, and has made considerable progress in our Chevy Chase neighborhood. DDOE has built rain gardens, porous pavements, encouraged the planting of shade trees, and taken other measures to reduce and capture runoff before it enters the watershed. Reducing stormwater runoff also helps to mitigate flooding, which has been a major problem for some of the homes near the proposed complex. Maret's plan to remove trees **and** to replace the soil with acres of artificial turf will reverse the progress the city has made to manage stormwater runoff in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the proposed sports complex and in the entire community.

I urge you to consider the environmental and other impacts of Maret's proposed multi-sports complex and to deny their current plan.

Respectfully,

Joanna Pratt  
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CC: ANC 3/4G