

March 6, 2022

Mr. Frederick L. Hill
DC Bureau of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW
#200
Washington, DC 20001

Re: BZA Case 20643

Dear Chairman Hill,

We are writing to oppose the plan of The Maret School and the Episcopal Center for Children to build a multi-sport complex on ECC's property located at Utah and Nebraska Avenues NW.

We live directly across from the ECC property and have lived here for 38 years. While we support the overall mission of the ECC and would like to see them succeed, we feel that the proposal, in its present form, is simply too much development for the size of the site. Two full-size sports fields, a 48-car parking lot and ancillary support buildings leave practically no room for setbacks that are necessary to mitigate effects of the noise that will inevitably emanate from such a facility. Scoreboards, goal posts, high netting and containment walls will turn this property into a neighborhood eyesore.

Our Advisory Neighborhood Commission has rubber-stamped a new commercial curb cut that would have traffic entering and exiting on Nebraska Avenue at the base of a blind hill. The traffic study that was used to consider this curb cut is fundamentally flawed, using traffic flow numbers from 2017, a year after Oregon Avenue was closed for a major construction project that continues to this day. Having lived on this stretch of Nebraska Avenue for 38 years we can tell you that, once Oregon Avenue reopens and people begin returning to their pre-pandemic office settings, Nebraska Avenue will once again become a very busy thoroughfare. While none of us on this street are looking forward to that, it is inevitable.

A further concern is the very serious water runoff issue on Nebraska Avenue. Many of us on the downhill slope of the street have spent literally tens of thousands of dollars to harden our sump systems and to drain water from our property in order to keep our basements from flooding. Covering 4.7 acres of the site with artificial turf and an impervious paved parking lot will likely further exacerbate this problem. Maret can talk all they want about their proposal for water containment, but the fact remains that they plan to drain much of the runoff into Nebraska Avenue which is already compromised by runoff. The trees and grass on the site that serve to absorb the water presently will be gone.

We know that you have received many letters in support of this development. Please take a close look at where these supporters live. It's easy to be in support when you live in Woodley

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Park, Shepard Park, Glover Park or any area not adjacent to the site. At the end of the day, Maret and its lessees lock the gates, head for their homes far from the site and those of us who live here are left to put up with the traffic, congestion, noise, water runoff and general loss of the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

Traffic, wet basements, noise, loss of trees and natural habitat, parking issues – these are all fallout that the contiguous neighbors should not have to bear. We believe that Maret and ECC need to modify their design to mitigate the effects on the neighbors, many of whom have lived here for decades. The contiguous neighbors deserve consideration and respect for what we have contributed to building this community.

Sincerely,

Ann DeStefano Sutherland
Joseph P. Sutherland
5869 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, DC 20015

38-year Residents