

**Michael Sriquei**  
**Commissioner, ANC 3D, SMD 3D04**



Mr. Frederick Hill  
Chairman  
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment  
District of Columbia Office of Zoning  
One Judiciary Square, 200S  
Washington, DC 20001

7 March 2022

RE: BZA Case 20643

*By e-mail*

Dear Chairman Hill:

In my individual capacity as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, and as a member of the DC Soccer Club governing board, I write in support of Maret School's application for special exception relief with respect to plans submitted in BZA Case 20643 to repurpose an existing building for use as a fieldhouse and further construct athletic fields at 5901 Utah Avenue, Northwest.

It is not often that a redevelopment project has such discernable benefits for as broad a group of community stakeholders as those that will accompany this one. The lease of land for this project represents an injection of critically needed funds towards the Episcopal Center for Children's mission to teach and nurture children with severe emotional needs in the region. Maret can securely meet its long-term athletic programming objectives and renegotiate an agreement with the District government that would return facilities at Jelleff Recreation Center to more public-intensive uses.

Community benefits are equally extensive. Athletic organizations, such as DC Soccer Club, will be able to apply to use the fields, and they will be open for general community use as well. Even as the District's premier youth soccer program, field availability is an ongoing, acute concern for DCSC's staff and volunteers; one I have also experienced on the ANC while negotiating field allocations with the Department of Parks and Recreation. For neighbors advocating to preserve the current character of the surrounding area, the proposal lays out a palpably less-intensive use of land than would be the case for such a desirable parcel, had ECC executed a lease, for example, with a residential developer.

This case further provides the Board with an opportunity to give institutions space to reevaluate generally-accepted notions of how field use factors into their missions as "good

neighbors.” Maret is a valued, indeed proactive partner of DC Soccer’s in terms of making its main campus fields available to youth athletics beyond its student body, and we have every confidence this project will allow it to expand on that commitment. Maret, however, is a fairly exceptional case. Similar institutions often close such facilities off from community use through conditions in campus plans, relief applications, and other interactions with the zoning process. Approval of Maret’s Special Exception requests will signal that other potential interpretations of what it means to be a “good neighbor” are possible in this respect.

Maret has devoted ample resources to tweaking its plans to meet narrow requests relative to the intended use of the facilities it proposes. It has visited and re-visited ways in which to discourage public parking on public roads and already hemmed in the site’s potential that even rare use of temporary lighting might enhance. If Maret seeks greater latitude to expand public access in the name of youth sports or any other worthy community use, it deserves to have the Board’s support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your service to the District.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Strigoi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a stylized "S".

Michael Strigoi