



March 8, 2022

Dear Chairman of the BZA, Frederick L. Hill:

I am writing on behalf of the DC Soccer Club to provide **comments in support** of the Maret School's proposal to build an athletic field at the ECC Site and the use of this field by community organizations.

DC Soccer Club (recently rebranded from DC Stoddert) is a non-profit organization that began in 1977 to provide soccer programs for children and youth in DC and serves thousands of kids each year from across the city in one of our many programs. DC Soccer Club's single biggest challenge in serving the DC community is a **lack of suitable, quality athletic playing spaces**. My biggest challenge in my role as Executive Director is acquiring field space for the hundreds and practices and games we schedule three seasons per year and the summer camp we run. Many DPR facilities are run down, and those that have been renovated have severely reduced usage for youth organizations. Season after season our staff works tirelessly trying to find suitable spaces to run our programs. Sadly, many children and youth leave the District to play youth sports, taking their resources and commitment out of the city into neighboring suburbs, because there is a lack of quality fields in DC.

There is opportunity to add a high-quality field to the extremely limited supply of athletic fields in Ward 4, and Maret School should be commended for their leadership and support. Maret's proposal to build an athletic field on the ECC site is the most responsible use of open space that may otherwise be developed into more high-density housing or high-rise living spaces.

We are appreciative of the leadership role Maret School is taking to support field developments in the area. Maret is one of just a few private schools in DC that regularly shares their school field with DC Soccer Club and other youth sports programs, allowing us to rent space for training and games. We are so thankful that they see the value of this field in helping us with our mission of getting more kids, beyond Maret School students, active

and engaged in youth sports. DC Soccer Club supports this field development, with the understanding that the space would benefit the community beyond just Maret students. Maret has a long history of being a good neighbor, willing to invest in and then share their resources. Let us all support this field development as a resource for the community and for youth sports organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Gootman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jennifer Gootman

Executive Director

DC Soccer Club (DC Stoddert)

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