

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

Date: December 31, 2021

Dear ANC 3/4G Chairman, Mr. Randy Speck; Commissioner John Higgins; Commissioner Michael Zeldin:

I am writing to indicate my serious concerns regarding the imposition of the Maret School sports complex proposed for my neighborhood.

1. It would be environmentally insensitive to remove forty well-established trees and topsoil and replace them with 3.7 acres of artificial turf, with additional hardscape for parking and sidewalks. This would essentially destroy the contribution that natural vegetation and topsoil make to the environment. Artificial turf's contribution to the heat island effect is well-documented. Off-gassing, particulate distribution and other effects would remain in the environment long after the games are finished. When we see the effects of climate change, why would we contribute to it, and especially to this extent?
2. This proposal would create a safety problem for a neighborhood known for supporting and protecting its children (more than 50 of whom live next to the proposed complex). Everyday pick-up and drop-off for the sports complex would occur at the same time as heavy commuter traffic, and traffic generated by the Episcopal Center for Children when it reopens. The ECC plans to operate both a school and an after-school day care program. With Oregon Ave. returning to service after years of extensive renovation, and with Bingham Drive also expected to reopen, commuter traffic would increase considerably.
3. As you are aware, Maret and others' use of the site would likely overwhelm our neighborhood streets with traffic and parked cars nearly every day. Game days would bring congestion and noise akin to what we experience from other nearby fields, most notably St. John's College High School less than a mile away. The two sports facilities might frequently have concurrent "game days," compounding the problem.
4. The proposal seeks too much lot coverage and too much development and activity on a small site with too little in the way of visual and sound buffers. The huge footprint would overwhelm the scale of the neighborhood; the intensity of land use would be unprecedented in our city. The request for zoning relief to allow this activity in an R-1-B zoning district runs counter to zoning principles and the fabric of our neighborhood. This zoning designation is intended to protect and stabilize quiet residential areas suitable for family life. The request for a special exception to allow parking 50 cars in the "front yard" facing Nebraska Avenue would be completely out of keeping with the single-family character of this neighborhood.
5. High retaining walls required to level the 35-foot elevation change across the site would dwarf the scale of our homes.

6. Noise would be a constant concern. The maximum allowable sound level in this zoning district is 60 dB, and sports activities regularly exceed that limit.

7. Maret's intention to use the site for its own teams, and to sub-lease the facility to other sports teams and leagues would have neighbors facing the issues raised above nearly every day of the year with no relief.

**I object to Maret's proposal to disrupt our neighborhood - for the above stated reasons. In addition, I do not want this to set a precedent for future development in our city.**

Add a personal comment: I am also concerned about the message this sends to District residents as a whole – that an institution (or group of people) with enough money can bully its way into the neighborhood of its choosing to benefit its own small community of high-income families, to the detriment of the environment and the neighborhood population.

The environmental impact of this proposed construction is also extremely problematic, both symbolically and in fact. The District has recently invested a significant amount of money, time and effort in this neighborhood to improve the environmental impact of water run-off into Rock Creek, e.g. by adding natural filtration bays along Northampton Street, etc. That is the direction that our construction efforts should take, at a time when our planet is very much in peril.

Respectfully,

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