

January 16, 2021

Dear ANC 3/4G Chairman Mr. Randy Speck and Commissioner John Higgins;

I am writing regarding the Maret School's proposal to create a sports complex on Nebraska Ave NW. I am concerned about this complex, but I first want to note that I would highly support continuing to use the ECC land as a school (especially a DCPS school if that is possible) and/or allowing the fields to be open to more residents and become part of DPR. This will preserve local access as well as the land's benefit to all residents, not just to one private school miles away that has a bad track record of cordoning off shared space and disregarding neighbors. My concern is specifically how Maret intends to use and transform the space in ways that are damaging to the environment and that neglect local kids and nearby residents.

Environment: In an era of global warming, the very last thing our city should be doing is removing mature shade producing trees, which lower air temperatures significantly, stabilize topsoil, and prevent runoff (which is so detrimental to our city that we have programs to pay residents to plant native trees.) Maret however wants to remove forty mature trees and topsoil and replace them with acres of artificial turf, with additional hardscape for parking. Artificial turf doubly contributes to global warming, both because it is heat-trapping and because it offgasses VOC chemicals into the air and into lung particulate for years. This plan harms the environment and air quality.

Development: The proposal seeks too much lot coverage and too much development on a small site with too little in the way of visual and sound buffers. Building a parking lot on Nebraska Avenue is going to block traffic on a small street, contribute even more to air pollution, and will never even be used by residents, but primarily by buses that will continue to run while waiting for passengers during games. High retaining walls required to level the 35-foot elevation change will visually block access and install a weird enormous separation wall in the middle of the neighborhood.

Trust: This is hard to write, but Maret has a pretty terrible reputation among public school families and playground users for its takeover of Jelleff. They are not known to share public space thoughtfully or care about students besides their own. Because of their track record, we do not trust Maret to keep its promises about noise, lights, and other limits to their use of the space. As they plan to rent the field whenever they are not using it, they will also be turning the land into a profit-generating venture, once again at the expense of local families barred from using the space except for an hour here or there.

In sum, far from making the ECC grounds shared and open, Maret's project will bar neighbors from access while disrupting the local ecosystem and polluting the land. I wish very much that we could use this wonderful space differently, to make it accessible to the local kids and families who live near it, to develop it thoughtfully while keeping it as a community resource.

Respectfully,



Elizabeth Anker, 6016 Nebraska Ave NW