

6008 Utah Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20015

January 17, 2022

Dear Zoning Commission and ANC Members,

I live at 6008 Utah Avenue, NW, a few blocks from the Episcopal Center for Children.

I am writing to express my opposition to the Maret School's plan to introduce multiple sports fields behind the Episcopal Center.

Specifically,

- The scale of the plans are aggressive. The design would occupy every possible square inch of the current field, remove the trees, provide inadequate barriers between the sports facilities and neighboring homes, and would require unusually large walls, fences, (up to 25 feet) and netting.
- At a time when the District is frequently seeing once-in-a-lifetime weather conditions, the plans make inadequate accounting for stormwater management. We can anticipate significant flooding if the plans do not take unusual precautions.
- I object to a wealthy independent school using the field as a vehicle for budget enhancement. If this is to be for a true educational use, rather than leasing time to other sports teams and leagues, Maret should consider creating opportunities for its students to serve as mentors, coaches, and advocates for low-income students who lack access to sporting facilities and leagues.
- The scale of the plan with multiple fields operating at once will bring significant traffic and noise to the neighborhood. We already have a lot of noise with the booming public address system from St. Johns High School sports activities. St. Johns is part of a highly competitive league that brings significant crowds and cars to its games. Adding another busy field to a neighborhood zoned for residential housing can work, but not on the scale planned by Maret.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sheppard Ranbom
6008 Utah Avenue

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

Date: January 17, 2022

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

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:

See details in letter attached,

Respectfully,

Your name: Sheppard / Ranbom

Address: 6008 Utah Avenue, NW

Email: srarbom@communicationworks.com

Email ANC 3/4G Commissioners:

Chair Randy Speck: Randy.Speck@anc.dc.gov
 Commissioner John Higgins: 3G02@anc.dc.gov

Postal:

ANC 3/4G
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 P.O. Box 6252
 Washington, DC 20015

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dcoz@dc.gov

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 District of Columbia Office of Zoning
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