

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Elizabeth Engel <tcbulla@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 3, 2022 11:16 AM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Speck, Randy (SMD 3G03); Higgins, John (SMD 3G02)
Subject: BZA Application No. 20643: Maret School Athletic Fields Project

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Dear Chairman Hill,

I am writing with comments in support of Maret School's Athletic Field Project BZA Application.

My family and I live at 3311 Quesada St NW, Washington, DC 20015, a few block away from the ECC property. I am also a current Maret parent, although my child dances with CityDance Conservatory, so we are not highly involved in Maret's sports programming.

As a board member of Friends of Lafayette Park, I have engaged closely with our neighborhood and ANC on many contentious issues regarding the use of neighborhood parks and facilities, the proposed development or renovations of nearby properties, traffic and safety concerns related to facilities usage, and other challenges neighbors faced with the private developers and contractors involved in prior large-scale development and construction projects in our neighborhood.

In all of the prior development and renovation project debates in our neighborhood, there are some common issues at the heart of the neighbors' concerns: lighting, noise, nighttime use, run off, trees, traffic and parking, community access to the facilities, and consideration for neighbors during and after the project.

Speaking from experience, there are very few private or public development/construction partners who are as considerate and responsive to the local neighbors and community concerns. Through numerous listening sessions, meetings, and open feedback forms, Maret has listened to the neighbors' concerns and made significant changes to their plans to address the neighbors' concerns.

ECC, as a therapeutic school serving children with emotional disabilities and their families, is a valuable institution for the city and greater community. It is clear that, for financial reasons, ECC must lease or sell this open space on their property. As a neighborhood, we are very lucky to have Maret partner with ECC to lease and enhance the field space in keeping with the current use of the site and with consideration for the concerns of the surrounding neighbors.

Below is the list of reasons that I support Maret's in this application to the BZA:

- There will be no athletic lighting and no nighttime use of the fields (with an express prohibition in the ECC/Maret lease)
- **No amplified sound systems**
- There will be on-site parking for 48 vehicles and a bus loading/unloading zone to keep on-street parking available for local residents
- Maret has stormwater run-off mitigation measures incorporated in the design, a significant improvement over what is currently on the property (Maret designed to a 25-year storm standard, well above the 15-year requirement)
- Maret is collaborating with DC Urban Forestry to retain and maintain healthy trees and oversee the transplant of 4 Heritage trees
- A large separate corner of the property will be maintained as a natural park-like setting for use by the neighbors
- Maret's design includes plentiful and attractive landscaping will be installed surrounding the site to buffer views of neighbors, which will be maintained by Maret

- Maret is using a new, environmentally conscious turf – this is a different product than the traditional artificial turf of the past (e.g., eliminating crumb rubber fill and using wood-based infill, increased water conservation, eliminating contamination from fertilizers and pesticides needed to maintain grass field surfaces, reduction of pollution-producing maintenance equipment, etc.).
- The community will have access to the fields, and Maret will work with the community to determine the hours during which the fields will be available for general community use
- In response to neighbor concerns, Maret reduced the hours of proposed field usage by DC youth sports organizations
- Maret comprehensively reviewed transportation impacts associated with the project and proposed effective mitigation strategies, including infrastructure improvements; an updated Transportation Management Plan; additional on-site bike racks; and, along with ECC, the commitment to remove one existing curb cut on Nebraska Avenue adjacent to the proposed parking lot curb cut, which has been reduced to 24 feet in width
- In response to community concerns, Maret made several changes and adjustments to field elements, including: modified the location and heights of retaining walls; relocated the scoreboard away from the field perimeter and to a lower elevation; sited batting cages and bullpens to minimize impact on neighboring properties; relocated trash receptacles and confirmed that trash collection will not occur from the alleys adjacent to the field; shifted the rain garden toward the interior of site; proposed site fencing to ensure adequate security while allowing for neighborhood use of the fields at established times; and enhanced landscaping buffers to effectively screen the athletic fields from nearby residences.
- The ECC site is located at the intersection of two larger capacity roads, “collectors” or “major collectors”, which is well suited for access to an athletic and educational use site and can accommodate the modest use proposed by Maret.
- Maret is a conscientious and diligent neighbor at their Woodley Park campus, and they will be equally as conscientious and diligent with the neighbors at the ECC field property.

The Maret fields will be a valuable asset for the ECC, the neighborhood, and the greater community, and Maret, with their thoughtful and community-oriented approach to the field design and use, will make an excellent partner.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at (917) 572-0151 or email tcbulla@aol.com.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Engel
3311 Quesada St NW