

February 17, 2022

Re: BZA case number 20643, Maret/ECC Athletic Fields

Dear Commissioner Higgins and Members of the BZA Commission,

We write today to voice our support for the project to turn the existing ECC fields into athletic fields for the Maret School. We've come to this conclusion based on the below information and feel it would be helpful to share our experience as you consider if this project is right for our community.

As a point of reference, all signers of this letter live on the south side of Rittenhouse St NW, between Utah and 28th St. All of our backyards will be adjacent to the North perimeter of the fields, separated by the existing alley.

1. None of us have affiliations with Maret and some of us had not even heard of Maret when this project was announced. We took time to listen to Maret and have engaged in conversations with them about aspects of the project that matter most to us.
2. Of primary concern to us, is keeping the alley safe, as our kids (aged 1-7) use this alley to play on a nearly daily basis.
3. We also believe it is inevitable that something will happen to this field—it seems impossible that it will remain in its current state given the ECC's financial situation.
4. With that in mind, recreation fields that are at least partially open to the neighborhood are among the best possible uses of this space. It is our strong desire to have this project become reality in comparison to other options that would more dramatically change the neighborhood (e.g., high-density residential development, commercial development, etc.).
5. The Maret team seems interested in creating a project that works not just for them but for the community as well.
6. They have initiated and hosted multiple meetings and discussions with neighbors—in small group, in-person sessions; open-format virtual meetings; individual one-on-one site visits; and numerous phone calls and emails.
7. While we have had questions and concerns about the project and its impact on our community, Maret has provided information in response to our concerns; and, (1) made appropriate changes or (2) explained why suggested changes are not possible, mostly for programmatic, cost, or legal reasons.

In an ideal world, of course we would rather have this land stay as is or turned into a public park. But we also realize that isn't possible as it is privately owned and the owners (ECC) need income from it in order to support their nonprofit programs, which we believe are important for our community and the city of D.C. Replacing one field with another field seems like the next best option.

Maret has shown themselves to be open and engaging prospective neighbors. They've listened to our feedback for the project and made adjustments as they are able.

We are very appreciative of the due diligence by ANC3/4G and the BZA commission to thoughtfully and thoroughly ask questions about Maret's proposal, take residents' feedback into account, and ensure Maret meets the commitments and assurances it has made to members of the community in connection with the proposed athletic fields. We write today to offer our input that, thus far into the project, they are doing exactly that.

Sincerely,

Gabe and Jessica Cohen: 2836 Rittenhouse Street NW

Brendan and Kara Williams-Kief: 2818 Rittenhouse Street NW

Amy and Jonathan Kurz: 2830 Rittenhouse Street NW

Justin and Lisa Luse: 2912 Rittenhouse Street NW

Brian Eriksen and Carlos Muralles: 2822 Rittenhouse Street NW