

January 16, 2022

ANC 3/4 Chairman Commissioner Randy Speck,  
Commissioner John Higgins

Dear Sirs:

RE: Application No. 20643 of the Maret School for a special exception

I am an adjoining and nearby property owner to the two athletic fields and parking lot proposed by Maret School at 5901 Utah Avenue NW. I object to Maret's proposal for a special exception because of noise, traffic, the 60-200 students that will use the facility, the danger to children of the retaining walls and the damage to the environment.

The noise of 60-200 students engaged in athletics is considerable. The maximum level of noise permitted in this R-1-B zoning district is 60 db about the sound of a clothes dryer. In addition to this noise level are shot clocks and piercing referee whistles. Finally, there are the sounds of 50 parked cars and the two buses all revving their engines at the same time.

There will be a substantial increase in traffic. Maret's site borders on Nebraska Ave a major east-west thoroughfare in Chevy Chase where commuters speed up to 35 mph. In addition, emergency vehicles use this street on a regular basis enroute to Knollwood a retirement community. Maret plans to disembark the children on the sidewalk or at a drop-off pick-up location next to the parking lot. Currently the field creates zero traffic because the owner of the property, the Episcopal Center for Children (ECC) , has barely used it over the last 35 years

Maret plans to use the facility five times a year for pep rallies (rivalry games) attracting 200 participants. Most days the number of students will be approximately 60. However, Maret wants to increase the number of students by renting the fields to other schools. This opened-ended commitment would further add to my concerns regarding traffic and noise.

I am also concerned about high retaining walls one of which measures 8 feet in height and the other 12 feet in 4-foot stepped increments. Either wall is a clear and present danger to neighborhood children and Maret pupils who will take great delight in jumping off the walls.

Finally, the proposed use poses a grave threat to the environment. Today the field is an urban oasis, frequented by squirrels and rabbits, deer and hawks and the occasional fox. Majestic trees planted eons ago continue to grace the site. But Maret plans to clear-cut the site the trees replacing natural grass with 3.7 acres of artificial turf and hardscape for parking and sidewalks. Even blue sky will be obscured with plastic netting blocking the horizon for neighbors. The trees will be replaced with telephone poles holding up the netting.

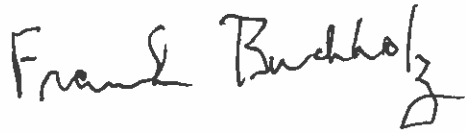
Regarding parking Maret claims 50 parking spaces for the property even though most of the students can't drive and the students take a bus to the field. In addition, the parking spaces are slated for the "front lawn" an area normally forbidden to us mere mortals for parking.

The Maret site is in a R-1-B zone that provides for single family homes up to three stories in height as a matter-of-right. The purpose of the zone is to protect and to stabilize quiet residential areas and to promote a suitable environment for family life. The Maret proposal accomplishes none of these purposes. The Maret proposal is not in harmony with the

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general purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps and will tend to adversely affect the use and value of neighboring properties.

Respectfully



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(revision 1)

Cc:

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