

4/13/2023 PUBLIC HEARING -
FY2024 Montgomery County Budget
Sheldon Fishman

President Glass, Vice President Friedson and Members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to address the County Council on the County's FY 2024 budget. My name is Sheldon Fishman. We have lived in Montgomery County since 1974 and raised our four children here. We thank you for funding the public schools they attended, the sports fields they competed on, the public libraries and more. Our grandchildren now benefit from what you fund.

I am testifying as an individual tonight. I enthusiastically endorse each of the budget recommendations in the written testimony of the Montgomery County Climate Action Coalition and the budget recommendations of Friends of Sligo Creek.

Speaker Tip O'Neill said, "all politics are local" Here is Sligo Creek. I will start with a local request. We live a few blocks from the Forest Glen Metro stop on Georgia Avenue where it intersects the Beltway

As you well know, you are trying to increase the density in neighborhoods like mine near public transit.

Please restore the cuts and even increase the budget for the Parks Department so they can preserve and grow the green areas especially in urban areas where you are increasing the density.

Picture 1 is the forests on Sligo Creek our backyard. Picture 2 shows the proximity of our home to the congested beltway.



Please expand what you are doing right. Please restore all the cuts to the Parks Department. The proposed budget for the Parks Department is 4% below inflation. Virtually all the Parks projects reduce greenhouse gas and sustain carbon sequestering living grass and trees.

Please allocate operating dollars that will fund the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition’s requests to give the county’s Climate Action Plan the urgency needed to address the climate emergency we face.

Please fund expanding the Parks Department’s grass experts’ takeover of the playing fields now badly sustained by the education experts of MCPS. Parks has more expertise and better equipment to do that job well to maximize the available playing time.

Please fund the expansion and early completion of turning over all of MCPS playing fields to the Parks Department

I will conclude with a budget request that saves money: a budget action you could take that would eliminate wasteful spending and eliminate unfunded mandates. Your choice to allow taxpayer funds to convert grass fields to synturfs in schools such as Northwood HS and Kennedy is a bad budget decision. Such a budget decision violates your Climate Emergency Declaration and violates the policy to view decisions through the lens of Climate and lens of Racial Justice. In the interest of time, this picture is worth 1,000 words connecting the dots between buying a new synturf and violating those guiding principles.



Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

Sincerely,
Sheldon

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