

HEATHER DLHOPOLSKY



April 13, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of FY24 M-NCPPC Parks Budget, Specifically the Community Gardens Program

Dear Councilmembers,

I had planned to testify in person today, but am submitting written testimony instead due to a scheduling conflict. I am submitting this in support of the FY24 M-NCPPC Parks budget, and in particular the Community Gardens Program.

I have been a gardener at Rocking Horse Community Center Garden for, I believe this is either my eighth or ninth year. This program is an incredibly organized and well run program. The Parks Staff are hard-working, dedicated, and excellent communicators.

The program is an enormous benefit to the residents and gardeners of Montgomery County. It also brings together the most diverse group of people you can find in what is already a very diverse County. Just in our garden alone on any given day, it is common to hear numerous different languages spoken amongst the plots. The gardens also bring together people of a range of ages, from young children assisting their parents to seniors, and everything in between.

It is not just the gardeners who benefit from the gardens. There is a community path that goes right past our garden to nearby shopping centers, and frequently people stop to ask questions or comment how much they love seeing the garden when they walk by.

In conclusion, I know that you have a lot of difficult budgetary decisions to make this year. I hope for your continued strong support for the Community Gardens Program, not just for the benefit of the gardeners, but also for the community togetherness the gardens foster.

Yours Truly,

Heather Dlhopsky

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