

Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings (OZAH)
100 Maryland Ave #200
Rockville, MD 20850
ATTN: Ms. Lynn Robeson Hannan and OZAH Board Members

March 22, 2026

Dear Ms. Lynn Robeson Hannan and OZAH Board Members,

In response to the March 3rd submission by Holton Arms School, a private school in Bethesda, Maryland, I am submitting an updated letter to be included in the record in addition to our previous correspondence. The purpose of this letter is to express my opposition to new components of the Holton Arms expansion proposals about which I have learned, in addition to reconfirming my previously expressed opposition to the proposed expansion in the Special Exception modification case, CBA-1174E.

I live in Al Marah, a residential neighborhood with approximately 150 single-family homes and 22 townhomes. Our neighborhood is located in Bethesda just inside the Beltway and directly across River Road from Holton Arms.

I am opposed to the Holton Arms expansion plans including the proposals which would:

- (i) increase academic year enrollment from 670 to 870 (with no mandatory traffic mitigation);
- (ii) increase summer camp enrollment from 665 to 970 (with no mandatory traffic mitigation);
- (iii) increase rentals of school facilities to outside groups on weeknights and weekends (with no mandatory traffic mitigation);
- (iv) construct a dedicated lefthand turn lane on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion Drive (the street I live on);
 - Please note that this proposal comes despite the fact that Al Marah residents did not ask for or want a dedicated lefthand turn lane. The school's proposed addition of a lane appears calculated to allow even more Holton commuters to use Royal Dominion Drive to cut through our residential neighborhood during their rush hour commutes to the school. Quite frankly, we do not wish to see our residential street turned into Holton Arms' driveway.
- (v) allow for using the Primary Day School ("PDS"), a K-2 private school located on the corner of River Road and the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion Drive, for Holton Arms overflow parking and using a shuttle bus go back and forth between PDS and Holton.
 - Please note that this proposal would potentially increase traffic through Al Marah and increase the number of vehicles parking on both sides of Al Marah streets, a traffic hazard that often occurs during PDS events.

During the Montgomery County Planning Board meeting on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at which I expressed some of our neighborhood's concerns, Holton school representatives stated that they have been engaging with the community about the proposed expansion. However, this has not been my experience. The only notification our household received was a solitary, vague postcard advertising a single zoom call at a date and time of Holton's choosing. That postcard was vaguely titled "Planning the future together" and made no mention of these proposals. Most neighbors I have talked to did not even receive that postcard. I was unable to attend at the time listed, and since the postcard was so vague, it did not constitute reasonable notice to the community about these proposals.

Al Marah is already negatively impacted by Holton Arms traffic on River Road, since we can only enter our community via either Burdette Road or Royal Dominion Drive, both of which are on the stretch of River Road directly affected by Holton Arms traffic.

Already, at the current levels of cut-through traffic, we regularly witness speeding cars and SUVs endangering the safety of pedestrians, school-children at their bus stops (including my own child), and people in other vehicles. The proposed expansion of Holton Arms will involve a significantly larger number of vehicles entering and leaving the school each day. The result will be a further deterioration in safety and traffic congestion in Al Marah. This proposal negatively impacts not only our neighborhood, but everyone who uses River Road near I-495.

Instead of Holton's proposal to intrusively construct a dedicated left-turn-only lane on the Al Marah side of Royal Dominion Drive at River Road, a better solution for Al Marah would be to leave Royal Dominion Drive as is and to prohibit straight-through traffic from Al Marah into the Holton entrance. If Holton Arms is genuine in their claim that few if any Holton commuters cut through Al Marah, they should be fine with this solution.

I hope that you will make recommendations to oppose the proposed Holton Arms expansion to help protect the safety of our neighborhood's children, our elderly pedestrians, and everyone else who rightfully expects to use our streets without the hazards of speeding cut-through traffic.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Steven J. Kolas
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