



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

April 25, 2013

Honorable Nancy Navarro
County Council President
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mrs. Navarro:

Five years ago the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board issued a letter stating our opposition to the County Parks Department's plans for the North Four Corners Local Park, CIP PDF-078706, which is to convert the existing ballfield into a "natural" area and replace the existing mature greenery for a soccer field and a 50 car parking lot at a cost of nearly \$6 million. We authored a letter on March 13, 2008 (which is attached to this correspondence) to convey our position on the issue. To reaffirm this position, the board's Neighborhoods Committee held a meeting with the Parks Department and community members to better understand the status of the park design.

After meeting with the deputy director of the Parks Department and the representatives of the North Four Corners Civic Association, we have following observations:

1. The community remains unhappy with the proposed design. Their priority is to preserve the area's existing natural topography.
2. The Parks Department explained that the park is in need of a life cycle rehabilitation that includes the following:
 - Installation of low impact storm water management.
 - Removal of invasive vines that are destroying the existing mature greenery, which will be completed without harming the existing trees.
 - Clean-up of the existing natural topography to ensure the existing criminal elements (drug activity, indecent public behavior) do not continue get a natural concealment.
 - Create additional parking spaces to better accommodate public events and to limit the burden on the neighborhood streets.

The presentation by the Parks Department helped us understand that the \$6 million proposed for this project is not simply to fund the soccer field but also includes the costs of the aforementioned improvements.

It is our position that the existing soccer field should remain and that its condition be improved so that it can be used as an adult training facility by the Parks Department. The Parks Department should also complete the other improvements so that the community can help devise a long term maintenance plan.

A revision of the Parks Department's scope of work will result in the saving of public funds. We recommend that the remaining funds for this project be utilized for other projects within the Parks Department budget. There are many places in the Silver Spring community where new parks and recreational facilities are needed or existing facilities could be renovated and repaired. The reprogramming of funds to other badly needed capital improvement projects – including the creation of new parks within the Silver Spring Central Business District – would be a more cost effective use of scarce public funds.

Sincerely,

Evan Glass
Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

cc: County Council & County Executive

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SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

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March 13, 2008

Honorable Michael Knapp
County Council President
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Dear Mr. Knapp:

This letter is to express the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board's concern about the proposed facility plan for the North Four Corners Local Park, CIP PDF-078706, of which the principal features are a soccer field and 50 car parking lot. We do not support the plan for the following reasons:

1. The proposed soccer field would destroy an area that contains a rolling hillside with several mature trees including a 175 year old black walnut and that is the focus of family-oriented recreational activities for area residents. For the last five years, the community has consistently and unanimously expressed its widespread opposition to any proposals that would effectively destroy this natural open space environment. The residents have requested that the park be designed for less intensive recreational activities that preserve the existing park's character and would be less expensive to both construct and maintain.
2. The park planning process has been flawed by poorly done attempts at public participation, which merely seek citizens' reactions to staff proposals and alternatives that do not respond to community concerns and desires.
3. The estimated construction cost of nearly \$6 million for a soccer field and parking lot is fiscally irresponsible when compared to the other ongoing infrastructure needs of the County. This capital expenditure is even more questionable when it is noted that the County Parks Department is not utilizing other alternative Silver Spring locations for more soccer fields that could be built immediately and at far less cost. Given the serious financial constraints that the County and State governments are currently facing and which are likely to exist for years to come, the park facilities project currently in the FY09-14 CIP Budget should be dropped and another alternative should be developed that would be more acceptable to the community and more fiscally responsible.

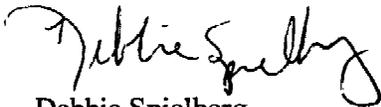
Mr. Knapp
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March 13, 2008

We are also concerned about the substantial damage done to the park's trees and landscape on Feb. 5-6, 2008 by the Department of Park's contractors. At least seven native species of trees (red and silver maples, hickories, cherries, sumacs, locusts, and dogwoods) were removed, the roots of other native trees were repeatedly driven over by vehicles which may result in their diminished life span, and many areas of the park were clear cut or have had the soil compacted which will stimulate the growth of invasive plants.

We agree with the community that an independent assessment should be done to determine an appropriate remediation plan to save the remaining native species and restore the park's natural open space environment. Furthermore, the planned remediation activities should be carried out in a manner consistent with best practices and satisfactory to the community. We urge the Parks Department to involve staff with specialized experience in removing invasive species and protecting native plants in future park maintenance activities.

We thank you for your consideration and responsiveness to County citizens' concerns.

Sincerely,



Debbie Spielberg
Chair

