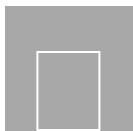


Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School

ATTACHMENT 11 DELETE REPLY REPLY ALL FORWARD 

Amy Roach <amy5roach@gmail.com>

Tue 2/17/2015 4:03 PM

Mark as unread**To:** Lindsey, Amy;

Dear Amy,

Thank you for inviting neighborhood input on the plans submitted by Montgomery County Public Schools for a proposed middle school on the current site of Rock Creek Hills Park. My husband and I live on Saul Road, directly across the street from the park. I have several concerns about the plan for the school's construction.

* Nearly all of the beautiful towering trees that give this neighborhood its character will be removed and replaced with much smaller new trees. The law states that every effort must be made to remove the smallest number of trees possible. I believe there is insufficient evidence that this effort has been made.

* According to the plan, nine retaining walls will be situated on the property, some of them topped with chain link fencing. No mention was made of retaining walls at any of the feasibility, planning, or community meetings. Perspective drawings and 3-D computer representations shown at community meetings did not show retaining walls. Only two retaining walls were shown on the concept drawings. As the amount of green space in southern Montgomery County is already quite limited, it is disheartening that the county intends to replace a neighborhood park with a four-story building surrounded by parking lots and retaining walls.

* The current plan does not indicate whether or not MCPS intends to honor its commitment to keep the school site open for access by the community. Is there fencing around the entire site? A walkway around the perimeter of the property? An adequate number of entrances to the property?

* The MCNPPC and the Department of Natural Resources designate the area as part of a 100-year flood zone. Several times a year there is sufficient rain to require road closings at the intersection of Kensington Parkway and Beach Drive. The school will significantly exacerbate this problem by generating additional runoff into Silver Creek.

* The plan includes a switchback where cars can queue while parents are waiting to drop off their children. However, the space allowed for the queue is inadequate given a school population of 1200 and will no doubt result in twice-daily traffic jams on Saul Road.

* The building height is 101 feet above the adjacent roads, in a neighborhood zoned at R90. R90's boundary limits have been met for the building's front, rear, and side, but the height limits have been ignored.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Roach
3624 Saul Road
Kensington, Maryland 20895

Community Questions Regarding BCC Middle School Plans:

1. What are the actual heights of each of the retaining walls?
2. Which retaining walls will have fences?
3. What are the actual heights of the fences on top of each retaining wall?
4. What are the distances between the retaining walls?
5. What is the planned composition of the walls – cement, block, brick, stone, or other?
6. What is the fencing plan around the entire school? What type and heights of fencing and where?
7. What is the maximum slope of the driveway?
8. What is the grade of the hill around and between the retaining walls?
9. What is the tree conservation and removal plan for the grounds around the ball fields? What trees will be removed?
10. What is the projected cost of removing the trees and building the retaining walls?
11. What is the updated projected cost of building the school?
12. What are the perimeter dimensions of the school?
13. What are the interior dimensions of the classrooms?
14. What are the interior dimensions of the school facilities – cafeteria, gymnasium, etc.?
15. What is the closest distance between the school and the senior citizen center?
16. What will be the snow and ice removal plan?
17. Will the ball and soccer fields be standard size? If not, what will be their sizes and how does that compare against standard ballfields?
18. What is the projected school population in the first 3 years?
19. Will the new school be an IB School, as is Westland Middle School?
20. Will the new school be a Magnet School?
21. How will the residents of the Alzheimer's and Dementia facility be protected from the effects of the construction period?
22. The plans show an emergency generator. What will be the size of the generator? Will it be interior or exterior to the building? What type of fuel will be required? What will be the plans for the fuel delivery to the generator? Where and how will the fuel be stored?
23. Regarding the lighting plan, what types and wattage of lights will be used?

Forest Conservation Tree Summary

There are several discrepancies on the plan and tree summary.

- Although the Forest Conservation Plan only indicates trees of 30" caliper or more, there are hundreds of trees and understory trees that are not listed and worth saving. Most of them are native trees, which are reference as "scrub" in the Tree Summary and other plan documents:
 - American Holly – 15'-20' tall
 - Tulip Poplars – 6"-24" caliper and 50' tall
 - Oaks – 6"-24" caliper and 50' tall
 - Maples – 6"-24" caliper and 50' tall
 - Locusts
 - Box Elder
 - Dogwoods
 - Eastern Redbud
- It should be noted that the Sawtooth Oaks on this property and adjacent properties are evidence of a historic tree planting pattern, possibly attributed to the Highlands Farmstead which was the original farmstead located on this site. The size and age of these trees indicates that the planting of these trees date to the original introduction of this species in the United States in the mid-19th Century. Therefore these should be considered heritage trees and should not be removed.
- There is encroachment on the stream buffer with the proposed removal of trees #2, #6, #7, and #8.
- There is an encroachment on the LOD with the proposed removal of tree #22.
- There are 3 clusters of Virginia Pines, *Pinus Virginiana*, at either side of the south driveway, and one cluster to the north of the east driveway way entrance on Littledale Road. Most contain 18" caliper or greater trees.
- There are countless sizable ornamental trees that have been planted and should be relocated because many of them are sizable specimen trees, including:
 - Serbian Spruce
 - River Birch
 - Magnolias
 - Cedars
 - Elms
 - Locusts
 - Cornice Mas
- The forest stand delineation narrative acknowledges that 3 of the forest stands are Priority 1 High Retention. (*copy provided*).
- Trees proposed to be saved – 44, 45, 50, 51, 52 53, 54
 - The survivability of these trees is questionable due to the construction which is within the root zone of each of these trees for the sidewalks, stormwater management 18"-36" pipes, retaining walls, grading, and proximity to the proposed building. In addition, Tree # 53 is referenced as a tree to be saved, but this tree is clearly at the site of the proposed retaining wall. Of the total number of trees on the property, this is a small proportion designated to be saved, with low likelihood of survivability due to the construction impact.

Forest Summary Tree Summary discrepancies:

1. Tree # 2 – Pin Oak at northwest corner of upper parking lot – Is a 52” caliper, not 45” . The root impact zone is much smaller than 35%. This is definitely a champion tree worth saving. The Tree Summary lists the condition as fair, which is incorrect. This is a healthy and vital heritage tree in good condition. This is an encroachment on the designated forest buffer and outside the LOD. (*see photo*)
2. Tree #22 – White Pine – 34” - Appears to be outside of the LOD and should not be removed.
3. Tree #29 – Pin Oak – is a 36” caliper, not 33”. Listed as in the proposed building, but is outside the proposed building.
4. Tree #30 – Sawtooth Oak – Is a 41” caliper, not 37”. The Tree Summary lists the condition as fair, which is incorrect. This is a healthy and vital heritage tree in good condition. *See photo*
5. Tree #31 – Pin Oak – Is a 41” caliper, not 39”. The Tree Summary lists the condition as fair, which is incorrect. This is a healthy and vital heritage tree in good condition.
6. Tree #55 – Sawtooth Oak – Is a 43” caliper, not 40”. The Tree Summary lists this as in the ballfield area, which is incorrect. This tree would be at the outside edge of a secondary ballfield. This is a healthy specimen heritage tree. The proposed plan is to remove this tree and replace it with 6 trees that will reach this size or larger in the very same area.
7. Tree # 70 – Pinus Virginiana - Is a 23” caliper. This is a native tree and is no longer in the path of the sidewalk and therefore should be saved.
8. Tree # 53 – Referenced as a tree to be saved. However this tree is on the proposed retaining wall and therefore would be removed.

Trees not represented on the plan:

9. Tree # 39 – White Pine – 26” Caliper – Adjacent to present driveway. In good condition. Part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.
10. Tree # 36 – White Pine – 31” Caliper - Adjacent to present driveway. In good condition. Part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.
11. Tree # 36 – White Pine – 28” Caliper - Adjacent to present driveway. In good condition. Part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.
12. Tree unlabeled next to Tree # 34 – Virginia Pine – Pinus Virginiana – 17” Caliper – This is a native tree in good condition and therefore should be saved.
13. Tree # 25 – White Pine – Pinus Strobus – 31” Caliper – Located on left side of driveway. In good condition. This is part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.

B-CC Middle School

DELETE REPLY REPLY ALL FORWARD



David Purvis <davidcpurvis@yahoo.com>

Thu 3/5/2015 7:44 PM

Mark as unread

To: MCP-Chair;

Cc: Lindsey, Amy; Mariella Purvis <mariellapurvis@me.com>;

To Whom It May Concern,

We would like to express our serious concerns about the most recently released plans for the B-CC Middle School in the Rock Creek Hills neighborhood. We have lived in this area for just over a year and are thrilled to be in Rock Creek Hills adjacent to the park where the school is to be built. We live at 9815 Haverhill Drive and face the trees that border the current soccer fields.

The current plan proposal has many deeply concerning impacts to the environment and the site. It is unconscionable that MCPS would be allowed to remove all but 4 trees across this entire property. In a county that is as well-educated as Montgomery County, it is hard to believe that this severe level of deforestation would be permitted knowing what we know about the impact of deforestation on the environment. Among many obvious consequences of the loss of trees, the increase in runoff into Rock Creek will further exacerbate an existing issue.

It is unclear to us how this proposed construction could possibly be in compliance with both Montgomery County and State of Maryland Forest Conservation Law and Storm Water Management Laws.

As Montgomery County tax payers, it is also very concerning to learn that the current proposal is almost double the original budget, with cost overruns driven largely by the need to make so many environmental changes to this property to make it a "suitable" location for this middle school.

Thank you for your time and attention in regard to this important matter.

Regards,
David and Mariella Purvis

B-CC middle school

DELETE REPLY REPLY ALL FORWARD



Suze Cooper <soozeetone@icloud.com>

Mon 3/2/2015 5:30 PM

Mark as unread**To:** Lindsey, Amy;**Cc:** Robert Cooper <cooperr@pcaobus.org>; Laura & Jason Sonnier <ldennis99@comcast.net>;

To whom it may concern,

We are new home owners within the Rock Creek Hills neighborhood and parents of two. We moved into the neighborhood last June and love it here. We are greatly concerned about the final plans made for the new middle school that will be built across the street from our house. We have a lot of issues with the size and design of the school being built on the lot.

Our first issue is with safety. With an expected enrollment of 1,200+ kids, we are very concerned about the lack of sidewalks. Currently, there is a good deal of fast-moving traffic on our street despite stop signs. We live on Elrod right where the road splits and we constantly see folks coast through the stop sign as well as drive above the speed limit. Without sidewalks, we believe that we are exposing our kids to a potential accident. Walking to the school would be even more dangerous in the winter with snow and ice on the streets.

Our second issue is the visual blight that would result from the building of this school. A four-story school that looks like an office building in the heart of a historic neighborhood seems odd. We did not purchase this home to look at a four story school with absolutely no trees.

Our third issue stems from the expected runoff into Rock Creek. The removal of all the current trees for parking lots would mean that there would be more significant runoff into the creek. There is already a considerable runoff on Saul Road from heavy rains and snow melt.

Our fourth issue relates to the fiduciary responsibility that all government employees should have to us taxpayers. This site is a poor choice for a middle school and it appears that knowledgeable folks realize this, especially with better options available. To spend possibly 60 million dollars on a school that requires so much additional spending on non-essential building fixtures like retaining walls, runoff reservoirs, etc., is reckless and speaks of poor leadership.

The above issues are our major concerns and there are more, including the decrease in the quality of the facilities, parking accommodations, light pollution, inadequate athletic fields, loss of the park and track, and more. We thank you for your time and dedication to this process and look forward to future communications.

Sincerely ,

Rob and Susie Cooper
Sent from my iPad

BCC Middle School # 2 Site Plans / Rock Creek Hills Park

Carter, Hill (Fed TPMO) <Hill.Carter@hp.com>

Thu 3/5/2015 10:52 PM

To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>; Lindsey, Amy <amy.lindsey@montgomeryplanning.org>;

9806 Kensington Parkway, Kensington Maryland 20895

March 5, 2015

Ms. Amy Lindsey
Environmental Planner, M-NCPPC

Dear Ms. Lindsey,

Thank you for meeting with the neighbors of Rock Creek Hills regarding plans submitted by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for a new middle school on the site of Rock Creek Hills Park. I am a twelve (12) year resident of Rock Creek Hills. As a homeowner who lives directly across from the proposed site, I have followed the evolving site plans with great interest.

Destruction of Rock Creek Hills Park is an irreversible loss for the county and for our neighborhood. Rock Creek Hills Park is one of the few remaining expanses of old growth forest in the down county area. I use the park several times a week and can tell you I have seen box turtles, foxes, raccoons, beaver, deer, small fish, crayfish, hawks, owls, ducks, blue heron, numerous migrating birds, and at one time a coyote, in the park and in Silver Creek directly below the park. Runoff from Silver Creek flows directly into Rock Creek and the greatly increased runoff from the proposed site will decrease the health of both Silver Creek, Rock Creek and the wildlife within both parks.

The proposed school plan will cut down almost all of the currently existing old growth forest at the park. The extensive storm water management issues associated with the conversion of currently permeable surfaces at the park (the two regulation sized soccer fields) to impervious surfaces associated with the school and the extensive parking areas required, will accelerate the decline of any remaining old growth trees at the creek due to increased new runoff. I witnessed the toppling of a tree at the stream whose root system had been destroyed by erosion caused by the water flow in Silver Creek. Given the greatly increased potential run off from the school site, certainly additional trees will be lost.

The continuing down county population increases are creating, and will continue to create increased public school demand. The school system is attempting to address this demand by converting existing parks to new school sites even while they have several schools rented out to private schools.

Where will all these new residents go to walk, play, spend time with their children, and enjoy nature, if this trend of destroying parks and forests is continued? I strongly urge you to help the county find an alternate path which preserves parks and forest, while providing the needed school facilities for our children.

If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance please call or email me,

Thank you,

Hill....

M. Hill Carter
9806 Kensington Parkway
Kensington, MD 20895
301.814.2840

February 17, 2015

Ms. Amy Lindsey
Environmental Planner, M-NCPPC

Dear Amy,

Thank you again for meeting with neighbors of Rock Creek Hills Park regarding plans submitted by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for a new middle school on the site of the park.

What would that school be like, compared to the park, or compared to other middle schools in Montgomery County? Our county's Parks Director said that the school "would obliterate the park¹;" the official in charge of planning the school acknowledged that "there's not going to be any trees left²." The school would be the middle school on the smallest site in the county without an adjacent (or "co-located") park to provide space for student athletics and recreation. The park fails to meet most of the Board of Education's official middle school site standards³; placement of the school contravenes recommendations of the Planning Board⁴; loss of the wooded hillside contravenes resolutions of the County Council⁵.

As we discussed, specific concerns with the plans include:

- The number and size of unsightly retaining walls. The plans call for many hundreds of feet of retaining walls as high as 22 feet (constructed as tightly-spaced pairs of 11 foot high walls). Our understanding is that most of these walls will be topped by chain-link fencing, adding to visual blight.
- Poor circulation of vehicular traffic, due to a tight layout of roadways on the site.
- Steep slopes of onsite parking lots and roadways, creating a hazard in wet or icy conditions. The lower parking lot will have more than a 30 foot elevation change, and greater than five percent grades.
- The pathway for walkers enters beside the car entrance, but then diverges to head up the hill. Especially in bad weather, walkers won't want to go so far out of their way; rather, they will shortcut, mixing with vehicular traffic, creating hazards.
- Excessive removal of vegetation, including specimen trees, resulting in little visual screening of the building (and retaining walls).
- Excessive discharge of stormwater into Silver Creek, a tributary of Rock Creek. Plans call for onsite retention of only the first inch of rainfall; all other runoff from the new building and paving would be discharged directly into the creek.
- Dust and noise from the estimated two-year period of construction will endanger the residents of the neighboring Alzheimer's care facility (built on the footprint of the former Kensington Junior High).

The small site makes it difficult to meet educational criteria in a way that is sensitive to safety, environmental, and community concerns. Clearly, it was the choice of the inadequate site – in the face of a reasonably clear offer of a much larger site – that leads directly to the deficiencies and hazards outlined above. (At a meeting of the Board of Education, when the then Chair of the Planning Board offered to make available the much larger North Chevy Chase Park, which had been recommended as the alternate site by the site selection committee, the Board of Education ignored her offer, and voted instead to use the much smaller Rock Creek Hills Park; previously, at a meeting of the Planning Board, when MCPS staff were asked what the proposed school might look like on the recommended alternate site, they could offer no comments, because they had done no such "test fit" or planning.)

The request for a "tree variance" is signed by Mr. Michael Norton (a private consultant, not an official of MCPS or the Board of Education). It states that "[MCPS] has taken no actions leading to the conditions or circumstances that are the subject of this variance request." However, this is incorrect; it was precisely MCPS's choice of the inadequate site that now, they claim, requires this variance. But section 22A-21(d) "Minimum criteria" of the Forest Conservation Law states that a variance must not be granted if the request "Is based on conditions or circumstances which are the result of the actions by the applicant." Such appears to be the case here, and so the Planning Board should reject the variance request, and thus the so-called "Forest Conservation Plan," which is, in my opinion, a plan for unlawful extensive destruction of trees and public green space.

Sincerely yours,
James J. Pekar, Ph.D.
President, Rock Creek Hills Citizens' Association

¹ See <<http://patch.com/maryland/kensington/parks-department-hasnt-given-up-on-rock-creek-hills>>.

² See <<http://youtu.be/K493b9vhqw8>>.

³ The park fails to meet official specifications for location, size, topography, and access. Indeed, the site fails to meet each element of the "access" criterion: Frontage on a primary (70' right-of-way) road; three access points (for safety, to separate cars, buses, and trucks); community sidewalks.

⁴ "[D]evelopment outside the flat portions of the site should be restricted... The site slopes steeply on three sides, and drains into a tributary of Rock Creek..." – Planning Board memo to the County Council, January 1986.

⁵ "Primary consideration [shall be given] to the conservation of the trees and other unique natural features for the continuing enjoyment of the ... community." – County Council resolution 11-548.

Dear Amy,

As an adjacent property owner, I have serious concerns regarding the construction of BCC Middle School #2.

I have searched the complete Schematic Design Work Session minutes, dating from September 13, 2013 until the final public presentation November 12, 2013. The only mention of retaining walls are a vague line on the concept plans showing 6' retaining walls at parent drop off and a 10' retaining wall at the tennis court., however this was never discussed and is not noted in the presentation minutes. Also in minutes of the very first meeting on September 13, 2013, on page two of the minutes "SD1-04" clearly states that no additional run off from the site will flow into the stream". Obviously what was decided in those public meetings has changed drastically and has not been honored. It is not documented and at no time did the community say that the present driveway cuts must remain. Had there been mention of a 16' tall retaining wall and double 10.5' tall retaining wall been mention, then surely the community would have not have agreed to it. The parking is the only thing that is driving the construction of this monument to bad architecture. To enter at the steepest point of any hill is always a bad idea. For this reason roads away follow the grade at the lowest point. Moving the drive further up the slope will still allow for parking but will also eliminate the need for the monumental retaining walls and save some of the forest buffer. There are options to save the some of the heritage trees and some of the forest. For example don't create a separate parking lot and student drop off, use the existing slope and put the parking under the building. This is already being done on several school sites in the area where space is limited. For example the proposed BCC High School and already constructed for several years Sidwell Friends. The present design does not respect the nature of the site and will forever change the character of the neighborhood. Frank Lloyd Wright showed that architecture and the natural landscape could coexist. The excuse that cars have to queue off-street is untrue and not practical, case in point, the new Rock Creek Forest Elementary has a huge problem with cars queued in the roadway that overflows the parent drop-off. As presently designed, I urge you to not approve the Forest Conservation Plan and Mandatory Referral.

Respectfully submitted,

John Sonnier
9716 Elrod Road
Kensington, Maryland 20895
240-381-7465

Environment Impact Concerns for the Proposed B-CC Middle School 2

DELETE REPLY REPLY ALL FORWARD



John Holbrooke <holbrookej@gmail.com>

Thu 3/5/2015 4:38 PM

Mark as unread

To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-c.org; Lindsey, Amy;

5 March 2015

Ms. Lindsey:

I was the coordinator for the Rock Creek Hills neighborhood during the feasibility study for the proposed Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School 2 that Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) plans to build in Rock Creek Park.

Environmental impact was not addressed in the feasibility study, and it has not been addressed at any other meetings. I hope that an environmental impact study will be performed and considered before ground is broken to build the school. Of utmost concern is that the school is planned for the top of a steep hill where the runoff would go straight into Silver Creek, which is a tributary that feeds Rock Creek.

The Rock Creek Conservancy has raised their concern that an environmental impact study be performed. Environmental concerns benefit all; I therefore would like to echo their concern. Thank you for your consideration,

John Holbrooke

9823 Haverhill Drive

Kensington, MD

20895

Kensington Park
A Senior Living Community
3620 Littledale Road
Kensington, MD 20895

March 17, 2015

Amy Lindsey
Montgomery Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lindsey,

Thank you for meeting with us and for providing me with the opportunity to submit comments regarding the proposed construction of a new middle school in Rock Creek Hills Park, Kensington, MD. I am a founding partner of FSP-Kensington LLC and Kensington Senior Living, LLC, the owner and operator of the Kensington Park community that is located adjacent to the proposed site for the new BCC middle school. Kensington Park offers independent living, as well as assisted living and memory care neighborhoods. Our community is the realization of the vision of passionate leaders in the senior living industry who sought to acquire and operate a community that elevates the assisted living model of care and provides compassionate, quality care in an environment of comfortable elegance. Our facility is located on 8 acres of land occupying the former footprint of the Kensington Junior High School. We value our park-like setting adjacent to Rock Creek Hills Park.

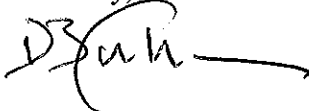
I would like to share with you my concerns regarding the proposed construction of the new middle school. Currently many of our residents take advantage of the walking path that surrounds the park; it is an important form of exercise for them and I am hopeful that a path will be maintained outside the proposed fencing so that they can continue to access this important community resource. Presently, the design appears to include a path that would be located inside the school perimeter fence and this would prevent daily exercise as our residents would not be allowed on school grounds during school hours or when extracurricular activities are scheduled.

A second concern that I wish to share with you regards air quality and noise. I would like the County's assurances that construction will be done in a manner that respects our senior citizens' need for a peaceful and clean environment. We would like assurances that Kensington Park's continuous fresh air-filtration systems will not be adversely impacted by extensive air-borne particulate matter that might be an effect of construction of a significant facility or poorly maintained turf. It is important that air quality and sound levels continue to allow our residents to use our porches, patios and outdoor areas. The ability to spend time outside is important to the well-being of many of our residents.

I am also concerned about the congestion associated with the construction of a 1200-student middle school on half the land area that had been the original Kensington Junior High School site. As a consequence of building the proposed BCC Middle School on this undersized site, the multi-story gymnasium and cafeteria/kitchens will be located just 140 feet from our independent living facility; quality coexistence will require that the school exercise continuous attention to practices that will not adversely impact our seniors.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me should you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Daniel Gorham
Partner
FSP-Kensington, LLC
Kensington Senior Living, LLC

3615 Saul Road
Kensington MD 20895
February 16, 2015

Amy Lindsey
Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Amy,

I want to thank you for your efforts to ensure that the proposed middle school at Rock Creek Hills Park complies with relevant regulations.

As a homeowner who lives directly across from the proposed bus entrance, I have been very interested in reviewing the proposed plans. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to examine the latest variation of the design. In this email, I want to address two concerns.

The first is the issue of pedestrian safety. As a member of a family who has lost multiple parents and cousins due to traffic accidents, I am very tuned into the absolute need for safe and accessible walkways, stairs, and emergency egress routes. The plan shows a long and curved path for walkers to keep them away from traffic. It is so long that we all know that middle-school students will bypass this route and create their own short-cuts. The paths that these short-cuts take are likely to put students in unsafe interactions with the dozens of vehicles entering and exiting the school at opening and closing times. One student-vehicle accident is too many.

The challenge of designing this school on this small sloped lot has apparently been addressed by creating student drop-off and parking areas that are too close to each other meaning that pedestrians will have to interact with cars entering and leaving the property. In this case, the proposed solution is creating a safety challenge. In addition, on review of the plan, it seems that the ADA pedestrian walkway creates a hardship because of the length required to locate a level area. For students and teachers who need this access, the length of this walkway does not communicate the idea that Montgomery County Schools cares about their needs.

I am also concerned about the proposed plan's ability to meet the MCPS requirement that all students can quickly and safely egress 50 feet from the school in case of emergency. Unfortunately, we have seen too many instances where this evacuation plan has been implemented and it is essential that this new school plan include the paths for all students to get out of school as quickly as possible. When reviewing the plan, this does not appear possible from the lower level of the school where the students would have to egress to a parking area and heavily fenced area with retaining walls, essentially locking them in to very close quarters.

Based on stated requirements for parking for a school of this size, it is clear that this plan does not comply with standards. The proposed 110 parking spaces will not be sufficient. There is no

overflow parking available on the roadways. Originally, MCPS officials committed to our neighborhood that they take efforts to protect the nature of our quiet, peaceful neighborhood. Clearly, having cars parked on streets surrounding the school violates that commitment.

In addition to pedestrian safety, I am very concerned about the visual impact on the neighborhood. The height of the building, 101' above street level does not comply with R90=35'. The 20' high light poles with down lights along the roads and walkways will significantly pollute the neighborhood and negatively impact the elderly residents of Kensington Park Senior Facility, many of whom moved there because of the tranquil nature of the property.

The reference to R90 standards on the plan is inconsistent. The plan references that the school meets some of the boundary limits as specified by R90 for the rear, front and side standards. However, the height limitations are ignored in this chart. Since the school will be on a hillside, it will appear even higher, as much as 10 stories high. The overall impact of this out of character building will be seen from even Connecticut Avenue. One person mentioned the term "visual blight" as a way of describing the impact of the height of the building, the lighting, the removal of the beautiful green space, and the hard-armoured retaining walls.

For a county that prides itself on being green and protecting the environment, there must be a better way that protects more of the trees, provides safe and reliable pathways for entering and exiting the school and will provide the children the quality educational experience they deserve.

Thank you again for your hard work.

Sincerely,

Lynne Kaplan

Lynne Kaplan

Traffic Study for Proposed BCC Middle School at Rock Creek Hills Park

Sabrina McMillian <sdmctpms@gmail.com>

Wed 2/18/2015 8:40 PM

To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-c.org <MCP-Chair@mncppc-c.org>; Lindsey, Amy <amy.lindsey@montgomeryplanning.org>;

*Sabrina Dodd McMillian
970 Elrod Road
Kensington, MD 20895
301-933-8870*

Wednesday February 18, 2015

Mr. Casey Anderson, Planning Board Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Silver Spring, MD 20910
<mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-c.org>

Re: Traffic Study
Bethesda Chevy Chase Middle School

Dear Planning Board Chair Anderson:

This is to provide comments about the traffic study dated November 22, 2013, that was prepared in connection with Local Area Transportation Review ("LATR") for the proposed Bethesda Chevy Chase Middle School ("BCC Middle School") at Rock Creek Hills Park. My specific concerns are listed below.

1. The traffic measurements at the Washington Street and Connecticut Avenue intersection appear irrelevant. The intersection of Washington Street and Connecticut Avenue is south of the current Bethesda Chevy Chase Cluster ("BCC") boundary. The LATR states, "the Cluster boundaries are not expected to change as a result of the construction." If the Cluster boundaries remain the same, as presumed by MCPS, there should be no school related transportation through the intersection of Washington Street and Connecticut Avenue.
2. The traffic measurements Knowles Avenue and Connecticut Avenue intersection appear irrelevant. The intersection of Knowles Avenue and Connecticut Avenue is

south of the BCC boundary. If the Cluster boundaries remain the same, as presumed by MCPS in the LATR, there should be no school related transportation through the intersection of Knowles Avenue and Connecticut Avenue.

3. The exclusion of the intersection at Connecticut Avenue, Jones Mill Road and Kensington Parkway appears to be a material omission. A cursory review of the BCC Cluster boundary map indicates approximately 75% of the land area of the BCC Cluster is north of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue, Jones Mill Road and Kensington Parkway. <http://gis.mcpsmd.org/ServiceAreaMaps/BCCHS.pdf>. As a result the LATR should address the increase in traffic at that intersection.

4. The LATR appears to overstate traffic generation south of Saul Road, and as a corollary understate traffic generation north of Saul Road. The LATR appears to incorrectly allocate 10% of traffic generation to areas south Saul Road. A cursory review of the BCC Cluster map indicates the area south of Saul Road is within the 1.5 mile walk area prescribed by MCPS <http://gis.mcpsmd.org/ServiceAreaMaps/BCCHS.pdf>.

5. The exclusion of the intersection of Saul Road and Kensington Parkway appears to be a material omission. It appears substantially all of the traffic in and out of the proposed BCC Middle School will flow through that intersection. Currently traffic is controlled by 4 way stop signs. It appears school related traffic will have a material impact.

6. The LATR contemplates a school day that ends at 2:40 PM and uses 2:15 – 3:15 as the afternoon peak hour. This appears no longer accurate, since the school day will end at 3:00 in 2017.

7. The student populations, and attendant traffic generation statistics for Herbert Hoover Middle School (“Hoover”) and Thomas W Pyle Middle School (“Pyle”), do not appear to be comparable to the population that can be expected at the proposed BCC Middle School. I believe the population at Westland Middle School, which currently serves all of the students within the BCC boundary, is the best proxy for the expected population at BCC Middle School. The population of Westland is 11.9% FARMS, 6.5% ESOL and 9.3% special education.

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/glance/currentyear/schools/03412.pdf> It can be expected BCC Middle School will not increase the concentration of racial minorities or FARMS students within the cluster. As a result, BCC Middle School should have a similar economic and racial mix. The population at Herbert Hoover Middle School is less than 5% FARMS, less than 5% ESOL, and 9.8% special education, <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/glance/currentyear/schools/03228.pdf>. The population at Thomas W Pyle Middle School is

less than 5% FARMS and less than 5% ESOL, and 7.2% special education. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/regulatoryaccountability/glance/currentyear/schools/03428.pdf>

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the traffic study.

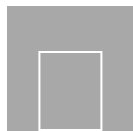
Sincerely,

Sabrina Dodd McMillian

cc: Amy.Lindsey@mncppc-mc.org

Rock Creek Hills Park/Proposed Middle School

DELETE REPLY REPLY ALL FORWARD



Martin Goldsmith <mjginex52@gmail.com>

Tue 2/17/2015 12:31 PM

Mark as unread

To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-c.org; Lindsey, Amy;

Dear Ms. Lindsey,

I'm one of the people who attended the meeting at your offices last week to discuss the proposal to build a middle school on the grounds of what is now Rock Creek Hills Park in Kensington. My wife and I live on Saul Road, directly across the street from the park. I am aware that increased population in Montgomery County has made it necessary for more schools to be built and I am a fervent supporter of the need for quality public school education in this second decade of the 21st Century. But to the best of my knowledge, the current plan has been inadequately thought through.

As I understand it, the proposed site is woefully small for the required facility, a modern school with its attendant athletic fields and parking requirements. Rock Creek Hills Park consists of thirteen acres, nearly half the size of what MCPS has in the past declared is necessary. Why would the school board wish to shoehorn such an important facility into a space that cannot sustain it? Such a decision smacks of a farmer deciding to graze 500 cows in a field that only has enough grass for 250 or 270 cows ... both the field and the herd will suffer.

I am also alarmed at the prospect of many trees being cut down and runoff from the school having a deleterious environmental effect on Silver Creek, the stream that borders the park, and on nearby Rock Creek, which flows through the nationally renowned Rock Creek Park. In these days when we are learning ever more about the dangers of global climate change, a severe loss of woodlands makes little sense.

I have other objections, including the unsightliness of a four-story building placed in a residential neighborhood and what sound like very ugly twenty-foot-high retaining walls topped with chain link fencing, marring what is now open parkland. There is the matter of many twenty-foot-high light poles, which will result in unavoidable light pollution. All of this will contribute to visual and aural blight in what has been a peaceful suburban neighborhood, not, as the Montgomery County Public School board has called it, an "urban school" in an "urban neighborhood." Increased traffic would be yet another aspect of the school's utterly transforming the peaceful qualities of Rock Creek Hills.

But ultimately it seems that jamming a large facility into a too-small space when, as I understand it, there are alternative spaces that are larger, is simply an ill-advised decision.

I realize that certain procedures have been followed and that plans for construction are proceeding. It is never too late, though, for a poor decision to be reversed by cooler heads and more rational thinking.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Goldsmith
3624 Saul Road
Kensington, Maryland



ROCK CREEK CONSERVANCY

Board of Directors

18 February 2015

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Montgomery County Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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Attention: Amy Lindsey

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Dear Ms. Lindsey,

On behalf of the Rock Creek Conservancy, I would like to register a strong objection about the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) plan to build Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School 2 on an undeveloped and wooded park parcel adjacent to Silver Creek and a short distance from Rock Creek. As currently proposed by MCPS, construction of this school so close to Rock Creek could damage the Rock Creek and undercut County efforts to meet its obligations under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4) permit. It also has the potential to violate the County Forest Conservation Act.

Rock Creek Conservancy is a non-profit organization with offices and members in Montgomery County and the District. Our mission is to advocate for the protection and restoration of Rock Creek's lands and streams. The Conservancy works with citizens and government agencies to improve water conditions in Rock Creek, its tributaries, and lands within the watershed.

Address

4300 Montgomery Ave
Suite 304
Bethesda, MD 20814
(202) 237-8866
rockcreekconservancy.org

Mission

Protecting the lands and waters of Rock Creek and revitalizing Rock Creek Park for people to treasure and enjoy

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Greater Washington's
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Constructing the school as currently planned is unsuitable for a number of reasons. The proposed school site is in Rock Creek Hills Park and lies within the subshed of Silver Creek, a tributary of Rock Creek. Much of the now-undeveloped property will consist of impervious surfaces (buildings, parking lots, etc.), which will contribute substantially to runoff into Silver Creek and Rock Creek, even with retention facilities. Stormwater runoff is a major source of pollution in Rock Creek and causes extensive bank erosion in both Montgomery County and the District. Building the new school where proposed will contribute to already environmentally damaging conditions in Rock Creek.

The County's Department of Environmental Protection continues to perform major stream restoration projects around the county's watersheds to mitigate the effects of ill-advised development projects much like the proposed school. Building the school in the Rock Creek Hills Park location will require multiple retaining walls and an elaborate water collection system. Significant and expensive environmental remediation will be needed if MCPS constructs a building and parking lots for 110 cars as planned on the steep property. Stormwater from the site would be collected into a 36 inch discharge pipe according to plans we have reviewed. All rain water that falls on the grassy hillside and flows into Silver



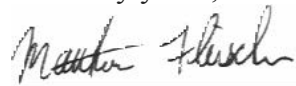
Catalogue for Philanthropy
2011-2012

Creek naturally would surge into the creek through this pipe. That alone demonstrates the problems stormwater drainage from this site has the potential to create. If the County is to meet its obligations for the MS-4 permit, it must turn away from such projects and carefully choose sites where it can reduce negative impacts.

In deciding whether to move forward, long-term costs of environmental remediation must be included in cost estimates and be considered as part of the cost benefit calculations. The cost impact on the County's decreased ability to meet its MS-4 permit obligations should also be included. Plans and cost-estimates for this construction must also include calculations of the continuing costs needed for environmental remediation in budgetary projections.

Montgomery County has been a national leader in making smart development decisions that consider environmental impacts. We appreciate the Commission's leadership in those decisions and for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Alex Sanders at asanders@rockcreekconservancy.org or at (202) 237-8866.

Sincerely yours,



Matt Fleischer
Executive Director

cc: Isiah "Ike" Leggett, County Executive
Montgomery County Council
Patricia O'Neill, President, MCPS Board
Elizabeth Feldt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED

MAR 02 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

0127

From: C Costa <ccosta33@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2015 3:01 PM
To: MCP-Chair; Lindsey, Amy
Subject: Rock Creek Hills Park - MCPS Proposed Middle School
Attachments: rch park mncppc letter 150228.doc

Dear Ms. Lindsey,
Please find attached my objections to the proposed MCPS middle school in Rock Creek Hills Park.
Thank you. Chris Costa

CHRISTOPHER R. COSTA
9712 Elrod Road
Kensington, MD 20895

Montgomery County Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Attn: Amy Lindsey

February 28, 2015

Re: Objections to Proposed Middle School in Rock Creek Hills Park

Dear Ms. Lindsey:

Please register the following objections to the Montgomery County Public Schools ("MCPS") proposed plan to build a Middle School (a/k/a Bethesda-Chevy Chase Middle School 2) on the undeveloped and wooded Rock Creek Hills Park in Kensington, Maryland.

Unsafe for students, educators and parents

The proposed plan is unsafe for students, educators and parents as it only has two entrances (including one combined students/staff, service and bus entrance) with hundreds of feet of twenty foot high retaining walls on one side of the building. MCPS standards require at least three points of access, with separate entrances for students/staff, service and buses.

Under the proposed plan, in any emergency first responders and law enforcement will have difficulty responding to the school with entrances that are too few in number and overloaded by multiple uses. Speedy response to and/or evacuation of students and staff will be compromised when time is of the essence. Noncompliance with MCPS own standards creates significant potential liability to the County, MCPS and it's architects and planners.

The existing surrounding roads are not wide or straight enough for the major transit of buses, cars, motorcycles, bicycles and walkers which will be coming to the proposed school. The inadequate number of parking spaces proposed by the plan (100 parking spaces, which fails to meet MCPS' minimum of 125 parking spaces) will cause addition hazards and delays from parking on surrounding streets. Multiple means of ingress and egress and sufficient parking – all as specified by MCPS standards - are needed to protect students, educators and parents.

Environmentally damaging to Silver Creek and plant and animal life supported by Rock Creek Hills Park

The proposed plan is environmentally damaging to the waters of Silver Creek and the plant and animal life in, on and supported by the 13 acres of Rock Creek Hills Park. Cutting down almost all of the trees on the Rock Creek Hills Park property and clearing all the understory vegetation is unnecessary and severely damaging to the environment.

Stormwater management systems decrease or prevent sewage from overflowing from the sewer system and spilling into creeks, streams and rivers. The proposed plan fails to provide adequate stormwater management to capture more than the first inch of rain. Students, staff and residents should not be exposed to more sewage contents in their local waterways due to the runoff from the 13 acres into Silver Creek under MCPS' proposed plan.

Page 2

There is an inadequate amount of green and natural wooded space surrounding and balancing the projected building and paved surfaces. The Kensington Park Senior Facility buildings on the far side of Rock Creek Hills Park are surrounded and buffered by trees as tall as (or taller than) the buildings themselves, and green space to complement the buildings. The proposed plan includes a MCPS Middle School that looks like a brick and concrete prison directly abutting Silver Creek and lacking trees, understory plants, complementary green space and buffers.

A neighborhood eyesore for 25% to 30% more than originally budgeted by MCPS

The Rock Creek Hills Park property is only 13 acres with some severe slopes toward Silver Creek and Saul Road. This selected site disregarded MCPS' standard of 23 to 25 acres with sufficient level grounds for all types of adult sized athletic fields.

The hillside from Rock Creek Hills Park has not slid into Saul Road for decades, so the need for hundreds of feet of 20' high retaining walls is questionable. The planned retaining walls appear to send the message to the students that MCPS' mission is to educate it's students in an eyesore of a facility which is designed to pollute their environment for 25% to 30% more than originally budgeted by MCPS. MCPS can do better, but we do realize the old saying "you can only give what you have."

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Christopher R. Costa

rch park mncppc letter amy lindsey 150228.doc

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FEB 19 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

0107

From: Jill Gallagher <gatorjfgal@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 2:21 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Lindsey, Amy
Subject: Rock Creek Hills Park/BCC MS #2
Attachments: RCHMandatoryReview315.pdf

Please see attached for inclusion in the Mandatory Review Report.

Jill Gallagher
9819 Haverhill Drive
Kensington, Md.

**Jill Gallagher and Pat Pugliese
9819 Haverhill Drive
Kensington, MD 20895**

February 19, 2015

Montgomery County Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Attn: Amy Lindsey

RE: Montgomery County's Transformation of Rock Creek Hills Local Park

I am opposed to the complete deforestation of Rock Creek Hills Local Park (RCHLP) because it violates the Maryland Forest Conservation Law, Storm Water Management laws and the federal Clean Water Act. Montgomery County Public School's plans to construct a four-story, 151,000 square-foot middle school, accompanied by nearly five acres of pavement, on this site are irresponsible and dangerous to both the environment and the community.

Walls and Fences

Because of the site's size – the smallest middle school site in Montgomery County –and its topography (severe slopes), MCPS has decided to construct NINE retaining walls, some reaching up to 22 feet in height and 480 feet long. MCPS' construction of these types of walls at schools raised the concern of then-Churchill Cluster Coordinator Melanie Twomey regarding the walls at the recently modernized Cabin John Middle School, which are smaller than those planned at Rock Creek Hills (which will have 55-foot drops). In Ms. Twomey's address to the Board of Education on Nov. 14, 2011 (three months prior to RCHLP's selection as the BCC middle school #2 site), she stated:

"New schools need to have a Safety and Security Representative in the planning process. Following the construction of Bells Mill ES and Cabin John MS, it has become apparent that a Safety and Security Representative should be placed on all future new school construction and planning boards. Schools would be able to avoid the following concerns: At Cabin John MS large walls with approximately 15-foot drops were built. **These high walls, in proximity to both athletic fields and walkways, should be avoided in future designs.**"

Not only are the walls dangerous to students and the surrounding community, their visual impact from street level will adversely affect the community's everyday environment. Walls and fences generate a sense of exclusion and contribute to a shortage of public space, discouraging a sense of community. Montgomery County's residents now have daylight access to this space – without walls and fences – for athletics, play and relaxation. The school's presence means that access will be extremely limited to after-school hours IF another organization is not already using the fields or courts.

It also is probable that the retaining walls will be topped with more fencing. Will this be chain link or the difficult-to-climb and more aesthetically pleasing iron fencing that was used at Cabin John Middle School?

It is not specified whether MCPS plans to add **chain link fencing** around the perimeter of the school and fields, and M-NCPPC staff could not verify this when asked during a meeting of residents and staff on February 10, 2015. If MCPS is going to fence off the property, I believe there should be **access points/openings** for the community to be able to enjoy the fields easily. Further, fencing would prohibit children from sledding on the hill at the north end of the property.

Silver Creek

Silver Creek runs along the park's western perimeter. It has long been a place for children to explore and currently is in fragile condition. A May 11, 2011, article in the *Gazette*, "Silver Creek remains popular, and in poor condition," included these statements about the creek's health:

"Silver Creek, also known as Kensington Branch or the Kensington watershed, was likely once a natural tributary, but now is part of a system of storm water runoff channels that collect rain from as far north as Viers Mill Road in Wheaton to be channeled to Lower Rock Creek," said Steven Shofar, division chief for watershed management for Montgomery County. The channel was ranked "poor" by the county's Department of Environmental Protection in 2008, the lowest ranking for streams in the county. It has been ranked poor since 2000."

(http://ww2.gazette.net/stories/05112011/kensnew203737_32544.php)

Green Space and a Century-old Tree

Our public spaces are dwindling. Amid increasing housing and commercial development, the county has chosen to remove a public space instead of adding a public resource by replacing an extremely popular park with a school.

When Montgomery County planners ask residents what they want in their community, one of the most popular requests is MORE GREEN SPACE. This plan directly opposes those wishes. Removing most of the site's trees, including a 100-year-old tree that lives on the site, is in violation of state laws and will harm the health of the community. I have yet to hear a valid reason for chopping down the century-old tree, which appears to sit between the fields and the driveway in MCPS' construction plans. The trees are a habitat for wildlife, beautify the surroundings, and help to counteract pollution from surrounding roadways that generate thousands of car trips each day: I-495 (1 mile away) and Connecticut Ave (1 block away). Further, most of these trees shared the space with the former Kensington Jr. High, which sat alone on a 20-acre site (without the Kensington Park eldercare facility) and had access points that balanced the car/bus traffic around the site.

The creation of this urban concrete jungle is out of character with this community and will severely alter its setting. The storm-water runoff from acres of pavement, as well as light pollution, noise pollution, and car and bus pollution will have a huge negative impact on residents' quality of life. Many families chose to live in this community for its wide-open green spaces and quiet nature.

From the beginning, Montgomery County has disregarded the best interests of its residents in its endeavor to shoehorn a 1,200-student middle school on a 10-acre, hilled site in the middle of a neighborhood. This ill-conceived decision will forever transform our community and sets a dangerous precedent moving forward on how the county treats the environment, public spaces and its residents.

Sincerely,
Jill Gallagher and Pat Pugliese
9819 Haverhill Drive
Kensington, Md.

RECEIVED
0147
MAR 10 2015

MCP-CTRACK

From: Laura <ldennis99@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2015 10:08 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Lindsey, Amy; ldennis99@comcast.net; ICE John Sonnier; Wright, Gwen
Subject: Mandatory Referral - BCC Middle School/Rock Creek Hills Park
Attachments: Laura Dennis Letter to Planning Board 2-2015.pdf

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Anderson,

Please see attached my letter with concerns regarding the plans for the BCC Middle School/Rock Creek Hills Park, and request to deny the Forest Conservation Plan and Mandatory Referral.

Thank you,
Laura Dennis

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board Chairman Anderson and Members,

I am writing to you about the plans that have been submitted for the Mandatory Referral Review of the proposed BCC Middle School. Not only am I an owner of a residence adjacent to the proposed site, but my daughter will be one of the first students to attend a new middle school. Like many parents, I believe that a new middle school would be a welcome addition to the BCC Cluster. However, there are many aspects to the proposed school as designed which pose environmental and safety issues and which are far below the MCPS standards for a middle school. The proposed plan does not deliver a quality or equitable middle school facility to the Montgomery County community and therefore does not justify the sacrifice of a significant contiguous riparian forest in the lower Rock Creek watershed, where the percentage of forested areas are shrinking at a rapid pace. This, combined with the fact that MCPS acknowledges that the proposed site area is "**a tight fit for middle school**" leads me to urge you to seriously assess the lack of suitability of the plan for the proposed development and to deny the plan based both on the Forest Conservation Law and the poor design.

Of great concern is that this plan fails to comply with Maryland Forest Conservation Law requirements. The complete removal of the nearly 4-acre riparian forest will have a long-term negative impact on the ecosystem of Silver Creek and nearby Rock Creek just ½ mile away. This nearly 4-acre riparian forest provides vital natural habitats and stream buffer to the Lower Rock Creek watershed. Today, the entire site contains approximately 15% of non-permeable area, and of the more than 85% permeable area, approximately 4 acres are forest and forest stands. The proposal is to remove 2.74 acres of the most heavily wooded 3.55 acre forest and replace it with a much larger area of 4.7 acres of non-permeable surface, which will be approximately 35% of the total property. The majority of runoff from this non-permeable area will be funneled directly into Silver Creek and Lower Rock Creek just ½ mile away. To support the steep slope, the 60-foot high forested hillside directly along the creek will be replaced with 480+ linear feet of retaining walls up to 22 feet tall, topped by 3.5-foot fencing, creating a fortified, prison-like environment.

Please consider:

- The Mandatory Referral applicant acknowledges in the *Request for Specimen Tree Variance* submitted to Ms. Amy Lindsey on May 8, 2014, that "**This buildable site area is restricted by slopes and a stream buffer that lead to a tight fit for middle school.**" (Item 1 - stet). This statement clearly acknowledges the fact that situating a 151,000 square foot building onto what is today an almost 4-acre forested area with steep slopes up to 25 percent rising 60 feet above the street level is a daunting feat. For this reason, the plan shows that many extreme adaptations to the natural environment are required to create an extremely compressed building and parking area, which still do not meet the minimum requirements for a middle school:
 - 9 retaining walls directly along the stream buffer and around most of the perimeter of the hill, up to 22 feet high, 480+ linear feet long, and topped with 3.5-foot fencing. Ascending to a 4-story building above them, the final result will be a fortified, prison-like structure inconsistent with the character of a school, and certainly inconsistent with the forest it replaces and the natural creek bed that it borders.
 - Approximately 4.7 acres of non-permeable surface, including asphalt driveways and parking for cars and buses, tennis and basketball courts (not including permeable sidewalks). This represents 35% of the total property.
 - 600-foot long, steep driveways of 5-8 percent slope directly alongside the stream buffer. This creates a danger for automobiles and pedestrians, especially in a school

environment.

- Very long walking pathways necessary to circumvent the heavily sloped area. Because of the constraints of the site, this school will not meet Montgomery County goals for creating walkable and bike-able school environments.
 - Significant in-fill required to create level parking areas.
- The *Request for Specimen Tree Variance* lists removal of 31 Specimen trees of 30" or greater in diameter. However, the Request does not identify several additional Specimen trees of 30" or greater diameter. Some trees are listed as "fair" or "poor" condition, when they are in good condition. In addition, the Request refers to the native understory trees between 24"-30" as "scrub," neglects to identify several forest stands, and the plan encroaches into the stream buffer and beyond the Limits of Disturbance. It should be noted that of the 4-7 trees proposed to be saved, several are clearly within zones of construction and therefore unlikely to survive due to the impact of construction. Attached is a detailed list of discrepancies, as well as a picture of tree #2 that is listed as "fair" condition and designated to be removed, even though it is outside of the LOD, but it is clearly a substantial sized tree that should be saved.
 - The afforestation plan proposes to replace the forest with .24 acre "to be planted in the buffer." This is not an acceptable compromise for removal of almost 4 acres of mature forest with more than 31 mature specimen trees and several heritage trees.
 - In the proposed plan, runoff from the area will be routed directly into Silver Creek through a network of 12-36" storm drain pipes. Justification 3 of the *Request for Specimen Tree Variance* claims that the property development "includes Environmental Site Design to provide for protecting the natural resources to the Maximum Extent Practicable. This includes limiting the impervious areas and providing on-site storm-water management systems... Therefore the proposed activity will not degrade the water quality of the downstream areas and will not result in measurable degradation in water quality." Unless an Environmental Impact Study has been conducted, it cannot be declared that this plan will protect the natural resources to the Maximum Extent Practicable, or that the proposed activity will not degrade the water quality of the downstream areas. Since the existing site contains less than 20% of impermeable surface, with majority of storm-water absorbed into the permeable surfaces, consideration should be made to the increased amount of runoff that will contribute to the pollution and flooding of both Silver Creek and Rock Creek, which already are known to flood several times per year. Consideration should also be made to how runoff from this 36" pipe will contribute to the erosion and degradation of the creek beds. Montgomery County spends more than \$350 Million of taxpayer money each year to clean and restore the Rock Creek watershed, with significant focus on Lower Rock Creek. Consider how this taxpayer and resource investment is counteracted by the residual effects of pollution and runoff from a 110-car parking lot directly alongside the creek and a 20-bus parking lot. For example, in light of the frequency and amount of winter snowfall that we have had in past years, consider where snow removed from a 600-foot long curving and looping driveway would be dumped, and the residual effect of salt and ice melt running into the adjacent creek and stream buffer at a single point.
 - Item 4 of the *Request for Specimen Tree Variance* states that "The forest onsite is preserved to the greatest extent possible. Additional forest planting and a substantial native landscape planting will serve to create greater ecological quality while establishing further buffering of adjacent land uses (residential). The proposed plan, with extensive retaining walls, fences,

driveways and other impermeable surfaces eliminates the ability to plant trees that will grow of sufficient size to re-create a thriving forested area or vital natural habitats, or to create buffering from the adjacent properties. Proposed preservation of 4-7 trees is not sufficient compromise to removing a significant contiguous riparian forest. The replacement of 2.74 acres of forest with 4.7 acres of non-permeable surface cannot and will not create greater ecological quality.

Replacing a nearly 3.55-acre riparian forest with 4.7-acre non-permeable surfaces is a bad decision, bad for the environment and destructive to Rock Creek, and inconsistent with the spirit of the Forest Conservation Law. I urge you to consider the overall long-term effect on the adjacent Silver Creek, stream buffer, and riparian forest habitat, as well as the Lower Rock Creek less than ½ mile away. Directing the runoff from all impermeable surfaces into the creek will counteract the significant investment and efforts that Montgomery County has focused on cleaning the Lower Rock Creek Waterways.

Montgomery County has declared a firm commitment to saving forested areas and tree canopy, including the Forest Conservation Strategy and Task Force established by the County Executive in January 2000, and the Tree Canopy Law signed by County Executive Isiah Leggett in 2013. We have an obligation to preserve our forests and tree canopies for our children and future generations, especially our riparian forests adjacent to creeks and streams. MCPS partners with environmental organizations such as the Audubon Naturalist Society and Chesapeake Bay Foundation to teach our children respect for the environment and tree canopy. The proposed deforestation plan is not consistent with the Montgomery County commitment or MCPS teaching. By destroying a thriving riparian forest with many mature trees, we are contradicting our message to our children and citizens to respect and conserve our environment and waterways.

For all of these reasons, I ask you to deny the Forest Conservation Plan and the Mandatory Referral request for this site plan. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Laura Dennis
9716 Elrod Road
Kensington, MD 20895

cc: Amy Lindsey, Senior Planner, MNCPPC

ATTACHMENTS

Forest Conservation Tree Summary

There are several discrepancies on the plan and tree summary.

- Although the Forest Conservation Plan only indicates trees of 30" caliper or more, there are hundreds of trees and understory trees that are not listed and worth saving. Most of them are native trees, which are reference as "scrub" in the Tree Summary and other plan documents:
 - American Holly – 15'-20' tall
 - Tulip Poplars – 6"-24" caliper and 50' tall
 - Oaks – 6"-24" caliper and 50' tall
 - Maples – 6"-24" caliper and 50' tall
 - Locusts
 - Box Elder
 - Dogwoods
 - Eastern Redbud
- It should be noted that the Sawtooth Oaks on this property and adjacent properties are evidence of a historic tree planting pattern, possibly attributed to the Highlands Farmstead which was the original farmstead located on this site. The size and age of these trees indicates that the planting of these trees date to the original introduction of this species in the United States in the mid-19th Century. Therefore these should be considered heritage trees and should not be removed.
- There is encroachment on the stream buffer with the proposed removal of trees #2, #6, #7, and #8.
- There is an encroachment on the LOD with the proposed removal of tree #22.
- There are 3 clusters of Virginia Pines, *Pinus Virginiana*, at either side of the south driveway, and one cluster to the north of the east driveway way entrance on Littledale Road. Most contain 18" caliper or greater trees.
- There are countless sizable ornamental trees that have been planted and should be relocated because many of them are sizable specimen trees, including:
 - Serbian Spruce
 - River Birch
 - Magnolias
 - Cedars
 - Elms
 - Locusts
 - Cornice Mas
- The forest stand delineation narrative acknowledges that 3 of the forest stands are Priority 1 High Retention. (*copy provided*).
- Trees proposed to be saved – 44, 45, 50, 51, 52 53, 54
 - The survivability of these trees is questionable due to the construction which is within the root zone of each of these trees for the sidewalks, storm-water management 18"-36" pipes, retaining walls, grading, and proximity to the proposed building. In addition, Tree # 53 is referenced as a tree to be saved, but this tree is clearly at the site of the proposed retaining wall. Of the total number of trees on the property, this is a small proportion designated to be saved, with low likelihood of survivability due to the construction impact.

Forest Summary Tree Summary discrepancies:

1. Tree # 2 – Pin Oak at northwest corner of upper parking lot – Is a 52” caliper, not 45” . The root impact zone is much smaller than 35%. This is definitely a champion tree worth saving. The Tree Summary lists the condition as fair, which is incorrect. This is a healthy and vital heritage tree in good condition. This is an encroachment on the designated forest buffer and outside the LOD. (*see photo*)
2. Tree #22 – White Pine – 34” - Appears to be outside of the LOD and should not be removed, as it is marked on the Forest Conservation Plan.
3. Tree #29 – Pin Oak – is a 36” caliper, not 33”. Listed as in the proposed building, but is outside the proposed building.
4. Tree #30 – Sawtooth Oak – Is a 41” caliper, not 37”. The Tree Summary lists the condition as fair, which is incorrect. This is a healthy and vital heritage tree in good condition. *See photo*
5. Tree #31 – Pin Oak – Is a 41” caliper, not 39”. The Tree Summary lists the condition as fair, which is incorrect. This is a healthy and vital heritage tree in good condition.
6. Tree #55 – Sawtooth Oak – Is a 43” caliper, not 40”. The Tree Summary lists this as in the ball field area, which is incorrect. This tree would be at the outside edge of a secondary ball field. This is a healthy specimen heritage tree. The proposed plan is to remove this tree and replace it with 6 trees that will reach this size or larger in the very same area.
7. Tree # 70 – Pinus Virginiana - Is a 23” caliper. This is a native tree and is no longer in the path of the sidewalk and therefore should be saved.
8. Tree # 53 – Referenced as a tree to be saved. However this tree is on the proposed retaining wall and therefore would be removed.
9. Tree # 67 – Black Locust – Is a 24” caliper. Is outside the LOD and marked to be removed. This tree should be saved.

Trees not represented on the plan:

10. Tree # 39 – White Pine – 26” Caliper – Adjacent to present driveway. In good condition. Part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.
11. Tree # 36 – White Pine – 31” Caliper - Adjacent to present driveway. In good condition. Part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.
12. Tree # 35 – White Pine – 28” Caliper - Adjacent to present driveway. In good condition. Part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.
13. Tree unlabeled next to Tree # 34 – Virginia Pine – Pinus Virginiana – 17” Caliper – This is a native tree in good condition and therefore should be saved.
14. Tree # 25 – White Pine – Pinus Strobus – 31” Caliper – Located on left side of driveway. In good condition. This is part of a substantial stand of white pines on either side of the driveway.



MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED
0139

MAR 06 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

From: Cathy Fink <cfink2@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2015 3:18 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: Lindsey, Amy
Subject: Rock Creek Hills Park/School
Attachments: Planning Board.docx

9811 Haverhill Dr.
Kensington MD 20895
March 5, 2015

Amy Lindsey
Planning Board
M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Lindsey,

I'd like to thank you for your efforts to ensure that the proposed middle school at Rock Creek Hills Park complies with relevant regulations. As a homeowner who lives directly across from the park, I'd like to address a few serious concerns.

I do not believe that the current plans insure adequate pedestrian safety. It is a cluttered site with cars and buses intermingling in ways that are destined to create problems and unsafe conditions. I have concerns that emergency evacuation would also put students and staff in additional danger, in light of the MCPS requirement that all students can quickly and safely egress 50 feet from the school in case of emergency.

It is clear that serious consideration and plans for parking staff has not been realistic. The proposed 110 parking spaces will not be sufficient and does not comply with standards. There is no overflow parking available on the roadways. Originally, MCPS officials committed to our neighborhood that they take efforts to protect the nature of our quiet, peaceful neighborhood. Clearly, having cars parked on streets surrounding the school violates that commitment and will make for messy neighborhood traffic conditions on narrow roads.

In addition to pedestrian safety, I am very concerned about the visual impact on the neighborhood. The height of the building, 101' above street level does not comply with R90=35'.

The 20' high light poles with down lights along the roads and walkways will significantly pollute the neighborhood and negatively impact the elderly residents of Kensington Park Senior Facility, many of whom moved there because of the tranquil nature of the property.

I also agree with Lynn Kaplan on the following important issue:

"The reference to R90 standards on the plan is inconsistent. The plan references that the school meets some of the boundary limits as specified by R90 for the rear, front and side standards. However, the height limitations are ignored in this chart. Since the school will be on a hillside, it will appear even higher, as much as 10 stories high. The overall impact of this out of character building will be seen from even Connecticut Avenue. One person mentioned the term "visual blight" as a way of describing the impact of the height of the building, the lighting, the removal of the beautiful green space, and the hard-armoured retaining walls."

Thank you again for your hard work. I hope you will be able to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Cathy Fink

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Kensington MD 20895
March 5, 2015

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Sincerely,

Cathy Fink

MCP-CTRACK

RECEIVED

MAR 06 2015

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

0141

From: Marie Lerch <mariellerch@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2015 11:54 AM
To: MCP-Chair; Lindsey, Amy
Subject: Deforestation and stormwater crisis in Kensington

To the MNCPPC Planning Board,

I reside on Saul Road in Kensington, and have serious concerns about the new school planned to be built on the site of Rock Creek Hills Park. The decision to put a school there is horrible and unlawful, but that decision has sadly been made. Given this situation, the Planning Board must act on the critical problems in the proposed site design.

We already have a storm water problem on Saul Road, which sends torrents of water into Silver Creek which feeds directly into Rock Creek. The proposed school design will completely deforest Rock Creek Hills park, and pave more than a third of the entire park property. Montgomery County Public Schools are planning to route storm drains directly into Silver Creek and claim they are only required to control the first one inch of storm water runoff.

MCPS' proposed site design for the school will destroy and deforest Rock Creek Hills Park and therefore violates the Maryland Forest Conservation Law, storm water management laws, and the Federal Clean Water Act. We are counting on you to defend these laws and protect Rock Creek (as well as the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay that Rock Creek feeds into) -- doing so is a clear responsibility of the MNCPPC Planning Board. Please insist on changes to the school site design to comply with these laws and reduce the environmental damage to the park, creek, and waterways.

Marie Lerch
3301 Saul Road
Kensington MD 20895
301-949-4412
mariellerch@yahoo.com