



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Donald Cochran, Director of Parks  
Mike Riley, Acting Chief, Park Development Division *MR*  
Doug Alexander, Design and Project Management Supervisor *DA*

**FROM:** Kathleen Dearstine, Landscape Architect *KD*

**SUBJECT:** Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan Worksession

---

## I. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Master Plan without any additional public vehicular access from Crystal Rock Drive or other location.

## II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

On January 6, 2000, the Planning Board held the first of two public hearings on the Black Hill Master Plan. Testimony was taken from the public on all aspects of the plan. Additional copies of the Master Plan Draft will be available at the worksession. The testimony from the first public hearing and staff responses are attached (Attachment A). In particular, testimony was received from the Germantown Alliance in favor of implementing a second point of access to the park from Crystal Rock Drive as shown in the Germantown Master Plan. Based on this testimony, the Board directed staff to study the access road and return with a recommendation.

To respond to the Board's request, staff hired a consultant, Frederick Ward Associates, Inc., to conduct the Park Access Road Study (additional copies of the report entitled: Enhanced Vehicular Access Feasibility Study, will be available at the worksession). The results of their analysis were presented at the second Public Hearing held on May 2, 2002. The majority of the public and the organizations who gave testimony at the second hearing, supported the "no-build" option (Attachment B). At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board established a "Sense of the Board" in favor of the staff recommendation.

### III. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The majority of the testimony from the second public hearing (Attachment B) was in support of the staff recommendation of the "no-build" option. Concerns raised in the testimony involved the environmental impact, the number of affected historical sites within the park, and the road becoming a shortcut for commuters. In addition to support of the staff recommendation, the testimony also encouraged additional trailhead parking for the trail coming from Crystal Rock Drive. Only one citizen voiced support for the road. Additional written comments are included as Attachment D.

At both public hearings, a suggestion was made for an alternative entrance on the west side of the park from Black Hills Road. Staff assessed the Black Hills Road access option and rejected it based on a number of factors. Black Hills Road exists only as a service entrance and cannot be converted to public use without realignment, engineering, and environmental analysis. Staff continues to recommend against this road access option as discussed in the previous staff report. Although there will be fewer trees lost than with the Crystal Rock Drive option, there will be some tree loss. The alignment for this road would not affect the three houses because it would be on park property and out of the Black Hills Road right of way. The length of the road needed to tie into the existing road in the park, would be 2,500 linear feet.

At the community meeting in January and at the second public hearing, interest was expressed for better trailhead parking to access the planned pedestrian trail into the park at this location. The Crystal Rock Trail project will provide enhanced pedestrian and bike access to the same community. This project will evaluate options to include trailhead parking. The owner of the Far North Village development on Crystal Rock Drive was opposed to the third option for the park access road because it went through his property, but he was supportive of allowing park users access to the Far North Village parking lots after hours and on weekends.

In testimony at the first public hearing (Attachment A), requests were made for a fenced area for exercising dogs "off-leash." Originally, the Master Plan Committee had considered this request and felt it was inconsistent with the park character and its purpose may be more appropriately served elsewhere in the park system. However, as part of a park-wide study exploring possible locations for dog-parks, Black Hill Regional Park is being considered for one of these facilities. Staff, therefore, included language in the Master Plan reflecting the potential for location of a dog park in Black Hill Regional Park.

### IV. MASTER PLAN TEXT AMENDMENTS

The Master Plan required a number of changes to the text resulting from the public hearings and the feasibility study. These changes are attached

(Attachment C) and will be included in the final document. The changes include the following:

- A. Page II-17- Item 23 in the table, Access from Crystal Rock Drive, add:

At the January 6, 2000 Public Hearing, the Board directed staff to study the access road. Staff continued to recommend against the road. At the May 2, 2002 Public Hearing, the Board heard testimony and will vote on the matter at their worksession.

- B. Page II-18 – Add the following paragraphs:

On January 6, 2000, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the Black Hill Master Plan. Testimony was taken from the public on all aspects of the plan. The Master Plan incorporates changes made by staff based on that testimony. At the Public Hearing, testimony was received from the Germantown Alliance in favor of implementing the second point of access to the park from Crystal Rock Drive as shown in the Germantown Master Plan. Based on this testimony, the Board directed staff to study the access road and return with a recommendation. In preparing the Black Hill Master Plan, staff had previously evaluated the access road and had rejected it based on environmental impacts. To respond to the Board's request, staff hired a consultant, Frederick Ward Associates, Inc., to conduct the Park Access Road Study.

Frederick Ward Associates and staff presented the four alternatives for the access road to the citizens at a community meeting on Wednesday, January 16, 2000 at Seneca Lodge. The majority of the participants that evening were in favor of the "no-build" option.

A public hearing on the Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan and Park Access Road Feasibility Study was held on Thursday, May 2, 2002.

- C. Page II-21 – Miscellaneous Issues, add the new staff responses:

Issues and Responses: Testimony from the January 6, 2000 Public Hearing is included as Appendix I.

Add last sentence of first paragraph on dog parks: As part of a park-wide study exploring possible locations for dog-parks, Black Hill is being considered for one of these facilities.

- D. Add the following under Miscellaneous Issues:

**RE: Park Access Road from Crystal Rock Drive**

The Enhanced Vehicular Access Feasibility Study considered three areas in its analysis: community planning, environmental/cultural resources, engineering feasibility and cost. The study resulted in four alternatives, three possible alignments and a “no-build” option. The first, or southern alignment, located in the proximity of the proposed trail, is least favorable. It is the longest alignment and would have the greatest impact on the natural and cultural environment of the park. The second alignment is an extension of the WSSC Pumping Station access road. The most favorable of all the alignments is the third, or northern alignment, which would require an easement through the Far North Village development that adjoins the park on the east side. It has the least impact on resources and it least costly. The fourth option is to maintain the trail access planned from this side of the park and not to provide for vehicular access. This is referred to as the “no-build” option. At the community meeting, the majority of participants that evening were in favor of the “no-build” option. Interest was expressed by the group for better trailhead parking to access the pedestrian trails into the park at this location. The study report is included in Appendix J.

At the public hearing on May 2, 2002, the Board heard testimony from a number of citizens and organizations, and concluded that the road should not be included in the Master Plan. Testimony from the public hearing is included in Appendix K.

- E. Change every reference of Black Hills Road to reflect the correct name (include the “s” at the end of Hill).

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A: Testimony and Staff Responses from January 6, 2000 Public Hearing.
- Attachment B: Testimony from May 2, 2002 Public Hearing.
- Attachment C: Master Plan Text Amendments
- Attachment D: Additional Written Comments from the Public

**STAFF RESPONSES AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN  
PUBLIC HEARING  
JANUARY 6, 2000**

**TRANSCRIPT FROM JANUARY 6, 2000 PUBLIC HEARING  
ON THE BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Name/Affiliation</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	John Corless, WSSC Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Suggests use of boat ramp extensions to accommodate water fluctuations on lake. WSSC would be glad to offer assistance.	Concur - Staff will follow up with WSSC.	
2	Michael Bowen, MD Ornithological Society Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Natural character of park must be preserved. Opposes further development in 10-Mile Creek area.	Minimal development is proposed for 10 Mile Creek (bridge, parking lot, and additional trail).	
3	Lynne Rosenbusch, Clarksburg, Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Supports additional hard surface trails and hopes to see Clarksburg greenway become reality.	No response.	
4	Royal Buyer, Rockville Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Sees MP as another example of taxpayer money funding project that will be available only to select few.	Park is open to all, not a select few.	
5	John Fauerby, Clarksburg, Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Supports MP, but has suggestions about trails. Trail 3.b.3 changed from Class I To Class II and routed along Clarksburg Road to park. Supports Clarksburg Special Park and suggests it be located In SE corner of Clarksburg Road - Old Baltimore Road intersection.	Recommended no Class I in the Clarksburg MP.	
6	Terry Fitzsimmons, Boyds Civic Association, Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Supports new maintenance facility and vehicular access from Black Hills Road, supports need for additional parking at Cool Spring Run trail, supports Clarksburg Special Park. Opposes hard surface trail connecting gravel lot on Clarksburg Road and Black Hills Road for security reasons, opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance on environmental grounds.	Master Plan recommends against access road from Black Hills Road.  Hrrdsurface trail is contiguous with Class I bikeway.	
7	Patricia Fuhrer, Damascus, Public hearing, 1/6/00 Letter, 1/10/00.	Suggests a dog park be added to the park.	Department is looking at park locations for a dog park. Black Hill needs to be evaluated.	Proceed with Department Dog Park Feasibility Study.
8	Dawn Harrison, Germantown, Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Suggests a dog park be added to the park.	Same as above.	
9	Marjorie James, Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Has concerns regarding drawing down of water level in lake. Should be minimal impact to protect fish.	WSSC has sole authority to draw down lake. Refer to interagency agreement between WSSC and M-NCPPC	
10	Jim Reynolds, Boyds, Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Concerned about availability of equestrian trails. Explains that a sudden change from natural to hard surface might restrict equestrian access. Supports Clarksburg Special Park.	A portion of the Black Hill trail is the only portion proposed to be changed.	

11	Harry St. Ours, Boyds, Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance. Fears that Black Hill is getting too developed.	MCPB directed study to be done on feasibility of this proposed road.	Conduct feasibility study for access road.
12	Jean Stone, Water Watch Public hearing and letter 1/6/00.	States desire to leave Black Hill as undeveloped as possible. Urges county not to relinquish control of lake to outside investors. Opposes paving of paths, building of amphitheater and building large picnic shelters.	Second sentence refers to proposed "privatization" of WSSC. Amphitheater is low priority.	
13	Amy Wang, Potomac Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance.	MCPB directed study to be done on feasibility of this proposed road.	
14	Brian Long, Germantown Alliance, Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Supports Crystal Rock Drive entrance, citing need for Germantown residents to have easy access to park.		Same as #11.
15	Dick Pelroy, Dave Magill, Dave Scull, M.O.R.E., Public hearing and letter, 1/6/00.	Support Clarksburg Special Park and see it as way to enhance biker access to Black Hill. Would like to see more natural surface trails and volunteerism to encourage mountain biking.	Adding natural surface trail from Mauglin House to Osprey Heights Loop.	
16	Fred Bagley, Germantown, Public hearing, 1/6/00.	Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance, fearing increase in cut-through traffic.		Same as #11.
17	Ellen Gilson, Germantown, Letter, 1/17/00.	Suggests a dog park be added to the park.	See comments on #7 and #8.	
18	Timothy Gier, Montgomery Village, Letter, 1/19/00.	Disagrees with further development in Ten-Mile Creek area. Cites that development will threaten waterfowl and the "rustic" designation of Old Baltimore Road.	Minimal development is proposed for the 10-Mile Creek area.	
19	Theodore Lewis, Germantown Letter, 1/17/00.	Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance and wishes development will be kept to a minimum in the park.	Staff feels development is being kept to a minimum.	
20	John Miller, Northern Area Recreation Advisory Board Letter, 1/19/00.	Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance citing environmental and budget concerns. Instead supports improvement and addition of trails in the Crystal Rock Drive area. Supports new maintenance facility on basis that upper Montgomery County is severely understaffed in this area.	Maintenance facility is slated for construction in FY02.	
21	Davis Richardson Letter, 1/6/00	Supports maintenance facility and recommends keeping concert amphitheater in plan. Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance. Recommends painting exterior of Mauglin House.	See above comments. The curator of the Mauglin House is responsible for painting exterior.	
22	Lori Goldner, Boyds, Letter, 1/6/00.	Supports expansion of connector trails and bikeways because of added convenience and increased home values these trails bring. States that crime will not increase as new trails are added. Opposes new boat ramp.	A new point of boat access only is proposed.	

23	Anita Kimberling, Germantown, Letter, 1/18/00.	Opposes paving of trail between Churchill Town Sector and Lake Ridge Drive. If trail does get paved, suggests leaving switchback connector in natural state. In favor of continuing paved path from Churchill Town Sector to Crystal Rock Drive.	Facility plans for both trails are in preparation.
24	Thomas O'Connor, Germantown, Letter, 1/7/00.	Suggests replacing existing playground equipment and opening up bathrooms for winter use at playgrounds. Supports hard surface trail to Crystal Rock Drive. Suggests paving trail between Parking Lot #6 and Spinning Wheel to reduce hazard of steep slope. Signs warning bikers and hikers could be installed. Thinks that grading and resurfacing of Black Hill Trail is not needed.	Playground is being renovated now. Winterizing the bathrooms is also being done. A facility plan for the Black Hill Trail is in preparation.
25	Cheryl Babik, Jessup Letter, 1/11/00.	Suggests adding dog park to the park.	See comments on #7 and #8.
26	Steven Smith, Germantown Letter, 1/5/00.	Recommends hard-surface trail to connect Spinning Wheel Drive to the park. Opposes Crystal Rock Drive entrance.	
27	Bruce Hill, Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board, Letter, 1/3/00.	Requests holding a second public meeting closer to park to allow for more citizens to attend.	The January 16, 2002 meeting was held at Seneca Lodge.
28	John Kerekes, Germantown Citizens Association Letter, 1/6/00.	Supports Crystal Rock Drive entrance as way to make park more convenient for Germantown residents to access.	See previous comments on access road. Same as #11.
29	Bonnie and John Collier, Boyds, Letter, 1/17/00.	Support small pedestrian bridge across Ten Mile Creek, but oppose any larger structure. If parking lot is built in this area, hope it is well-maintained. Oppose Crystal Rock Drive entrance.	A facility plan for the bridge is in preparation. The trailhead requires acquisition of the Ecker property.
30	Stacy Miller, Boyds Letter, 1/6/00.	Opposes Crystal Rock Drive and extensive paving of trails. Wishes more people used park as a link to other communities rather than seeing it as a barrier.	Same as #11.
31	Brian Long, Germantown Alliance, Letter, 1/19/00.	Supports Crystal Rock Drive entrance. Opposes capping park occupancy.	MP does not recommend additional active recreational facilities. Same as #11.
32	Neal Fitzpatrick, Audobon Naturalist Society Letter, 1/20/00.	Supports decision in Draft Plan to eliminate proposed Crystal Rock Drive entrance. Recommends that pesticides not be used in park.	We use Roundup Pro and few others.
33	Peggy Stone, Damascus Letter, 1/20/00	Hopes to see natural and paved trail balanced in park with expansion of hiker-biker trails. Suggests building additional boat rental facilities and an ADA accessible fishing pier. Supports new maintenance facility. Opposes Rock Drive entrance.	Staff feels trails are balanced. Have one accessible fishing pier; another is proposed in conjunction with new boat access point.



**TRANSCRIPT FROM MAY 2, 2002 PUBLIC HEARING  
ON THE BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN  
AND ACCESS ROAD FEASIBILITY STUDY**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Name/Affiliation</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Delores Milmore	Concur with staff; environmental impacts too great; encourages trailhead parking.	Parking is being evaluated in Crystal Rock Trail project.	
2	Terry Fitzsimmons/ Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board	Concur with staff; need for a new maintenance facility.	Maintenance facility is scheduled for construction to begin in August.	
3	Roy Buyer, Rockville Resident	Supports another access road into the park on the west side of the lake using Black Hills Road.	This access was rejected for several reasons.	
4	Bruce Schwalm, Germantown Resident	Enjoys park and does not support second access road.		
5	Peter Rosen, Lerner Industries; Nelson Clark, Clark, Finefrock & Sackett, Inc.	Support the "no-build" option; Option #3 would cross their clients property. Did support use of their parking for trailhead parking.		
6	Susan Soderberg, Germantown Historical Society	Supports "no-build" option, too many historical sites within park. Supports additional parking off Crystal Rock Drive.		
7	Rob Reinders. Germantown Resident	Supports "no-build" option; road would be a commuter cut-through.		

May 2, 2002

Arthur Holmes, Jr.  
Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Members:

Vice-Chair - Wendy Perdue  
Commissioner - Allison Bryant  
Commissioner - Meredith Wellington  
Commissioner John Robinson

Members of the Planning Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here before you today. I am testifying here today on behalf of the Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board regarding the feasibility study of an additional access into Black Hill Regional Park off Crystal Rock Drive in Germantown, MD. The Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board co-hosted a meeting with Frederick Ward Associates, Inc. who performed the feasibility study. The Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board supports public opinion and Maryland National Capital Park and Planning position that this road not be built and that it be removed from the Germantown Master Plan.

On January 6, 2000, the final discussions on the approval of the Master Plan for Black Hill Regional Park was held at 8787 Georgia Avenue. At that hearing a Germantown Association representative voiced interest to the Planning Board that an access road be built off Crystal Rock Drive in Germantown into Black Hill Regional Park because a line is drawn on the Germantown Master Plan. Other public testimony on that evening was overwhelming against this access road being built and Parks and Recreation also stated opposition to another entrance into the park. It is our understanding that the Planning Board ordered a feasibility study done because a line is drawn on the Germantown map. Black Hill Regional Park was built to provide a conservation area with some leisurely recreation and access to Little Seneca Lake. It was designed and built without any fields or courts that have scheduled games or sporting events. The activities that take place in this park do not require quick access by a mom or dad on short notice. The Black Hill Master Plan should be approved and this access road should be forever removed from the Germantown Master Plans.

When the Upcounty Recreation Advisory Board co-hosted the meeting that presented the results of the feasibility study to the general public on January 16, 2002 at Little Seneca Lodge on

Clopper Road we witnessed strong testimony from the public and Parks and Planning why this road is not wanted or needed. The study itself states that over 80% of the attendees at this meeting were against another access road. Black Hill Regional Park is a natural beauty park that provides a conservation area displaying a small part of Maryland's natural environment for all to enjoy at a leisurely pace. It does not have activity fields (baseball, soccer, lacrosse, etc.) or activity courts (basketball, tennis, etc.) that have scheduled events played on them that require quick access. The drive to the current entrance from any part of Germantown is not hindered by traffic congestion. The project manager reported that it took her under 10 minutes to get to the main entrance of the park by leaving Germantown in either direction. There have been no reports of traffic backups in the park. This park is home to beautiful woods and a beautiful lake and many types of wildlife and birds. Black Hill Regional Park is one of the best sites in all of Maryland and the East Coast for bird watching. This park provides what no other park in our county can offer: A leisurely visit into the natural beauty of Maryland without break neck traffic. It is a safe haven for hikers, bikers, horseback riders, wildlife, birds and boaters. We must stop and understand and appreciate how difficult it is to achieve what we have in this park today! This park is a truly calming place to visit. I encourage you to drive into this park and feel your blood pressure go down as its natural beauty and lack of high intensity activity lift your spirits.

If an access road is built off Crystal Rock Drive in Germantown into Black Hill Regional Park it will destroy the significance of this park. Construction of this access road would destroy heavy woodland, streambeds and a historic mill site. Upon completion it would become no more than a commuter cut through to Germantown from the north. This cut through will change the significance and functionality of this park. Cut through traffic will endanger the wildlife, birds, hikers, bikers and horseback riders that know this park for what it is intended to be, a small part of Maryland's natural beauty that everyone can enjoy at a leisurely pace without concern for break neck traffic.

Further evidence against the need for another access road into this park should come from the input we receive from our experts at Maryland National Capital Park and Planning. Parks and Recreation are always appealing for more support from the County Council and County Executive when they need things because their budgets are never given first priority and our communities are still in need of more recreational facilities;

ball fields, courts, gyms and recreation centers. If this road was needed or wanted then we would have heard from Parks and Recreation and the public long ago. What Black Hill Regional Park needs is a new Maintenance Facility. Our community and Parks and Recreation have stood together in requesting that facility for 14 years. The access road off Crystal Rock Drive was not designed into Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan. Its construction would forever change the significance of this park. Common sense should guide us in understanding that the absence of a line on one Master Plan (Black Hill Regional Park) speaks volumes more than a line drawn on a Master Plan outside its borders.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our position to you.



Terry J. Fitzsimmons

Terry J. Fitzsimmons  
Chairman  
Upcounty Recreational Advisory Board  
301 231 2234

Testimony to the Montgomery County Planning Board May 2, 2002  
On the Black Hill Regional Park Access Road Study

I am Royal Buyer, my home is at 15100 Sunflower Court, Rockville. I testified here over 2 years ago on the Master Plan for this park. Briefly my testimony requested more convenient access to the park than the one entrance north of the park. My testimony at that time is attached to this present testimony.

I appreciate the Park Department's effort to remedy this situation by the study which was presented to the public several months ago. This study proposed access from Crystal Rock Drive which would cost between \$3.5 and \$4 million dollars. (See photo of the vicinity of Crystal Rock Drive access.) However, a more practical solution exists. There is at present an access from Clarksburg Road which is limited to service vehicles. (See map of Black Hill Regional Park and photo of service road.) There would be no loss of forest which would occur if the Crystal Rock Drive access were built and the cost of paving the service road would be negligible compared to the cost of building an access from Crystal Rock Drive. Access from Crystal Rock Drive, depending on which of 3 alternatives is chosen, would require the loss of 4.54 to 6.34 acres of park forest.

I have not been able to learn why this service access is off limits. If the Park Department is obligated to the 3 home owners adjacent to the service road to prevent its use, it would be preferable to buy these homes, if the owners desired, than to go ahead with a Crystal Rock Drive access.

Testimony to the Montgomery County Planning Board January 6, 2000, on the Draft of the Black Hills Regional Park Master Plan

I am Royal Buyer. My home is at 15100 Sunflower Court, Rockville. After reviewing the January 6, 2000, drafts of the Black Hills Regional Park Master and Management Plans I have come to the conclusion that what is being proposed is the public funding of a limited access park. I have seen this same phenomena repeated several times in Montgomery County, whereby newly arrived neighbors to an existing park have successfully prevented its development for regional use. The objections in this case to vehicular access to the park, to the creation of additional picnic facilities, and to an additional boat ramp are all too common. The Park and Planning Commission in this instance is using taxpayer dollars to maintain a local reserve which will only be available to, and of interest to, those in the nearby area. It is a farce to suggest that this proposal is 'Regional' in any sense of the word.

Similar misuse of public lands occurred when vehicular access to Lake Frank was closed in 1970 due to the complaints of residents living on Trailway Drive. Royce Hansen, Chairman of Park and Planning told me he would rather close the park than put up with homeowners complaints. It wasn't until years later that another access was created.

Another example occurred in 1972 in my own neighborhood of Flower Valley. The development of our local park was defeated by the determined opposition of its adjoining neighbors. An area of 1100 homes has been denied a developed park, while our tax money is supporting what has essentially become two private tennis courts and a small private playground.

Park and Planning has the responsibility to provide recreational facilities for Montgomery County in general. It must not be allowed to continue to prevent the development of public parks, bowing to the narrow view of special interest groups.

Thank you.

Good Afternoon. My name is Bruce Schwalm. I live in Germantown, in "Churchill Village". I am speaking to you today representing my family and myself.

We greatly enjoy the natural character of the park and get there either via hiking/biking paths, or by car when appropriate. Because of our location, the additional vehicular access under consideration today would decrease the amount of time it would take us to drive to the park. But I am here to urge you to remove the second point of access from the master plan, for several reasons.

To start with, it is really unnecessary. The travel time (as measured by a M-NCPPC staffer) between the proposed new entrance and the existing entrance is four minutes! At a January 16, 2002 community meeting, this time was disputed by a tiny minority of attendees, notably, those who were in favor of the additional road. I'm still unclear about whether or not a needs study has ever been done regarding this road. Germantown residents can very easily access the park via either the Father Hurley/355/Old Baltimore route or the Rte. 117/Rte. 121/Old Baltimore route. Access to the park for visitors from a greater distance is easily achieved from I-270 or Great Seneca Highway, and not affected by the new road. Additional access to the Old Baltimore Road will be provided by a planned interchange and other improvements at New Cut Road and I-270.

In addition to being unnecessary, this road is costly! Four Million Dollars. To reduce entrance time by four minutes? There *Has* to be a more responsible way to spend the money if it's burning a hole in our pockets. Ask Jim McMahon how he would use \$4M to improve park visitors' experience in a way that is consistent with the Master Plan vision for the park. Spending money on this road is a wasteful mismanagement of public funds.

Public safety is an issue that has not really been included in staff's report, or the Fred Ward Associates' study. As noted in staff's report, the location for this road (Churchill Village) is the most densely populated village in Germantown. Put the road in, and children will get hurt, possibly die. Who among you would be proud to have voted for this project when the first child injury or death is reported on the evening news? Not so? How long after completion will this road become a commuter cut-through? In the most densely populated village in Germantown?

Environmental impact is another area that was touched on by the Consultant's study. Little Seneca is considered to be a "High Quality" stream. Petroleum and rubber/latex runoff from this road will eventually make it's way into the stream, regardless of precautions. Additionally, no one is certain whether there are any endangered species in the park or not. A biologist has walked through the park and told us that "this doesn't look like it has any endangered species in it". But that is far from a definitive answer.

Destruction of existing hiker/biker trails is the last point I will make today. There are several very natural trails that would be lost if this project were to move forward. To replace them with an unnecessary access road seems inconsistent with the master plan vision for the park as a whole

In conclusion, let me urge you to, once and for all, remove this road from the Master Plan. This would be consistent with public use of the park's natural setting today, as well as the Master Plan's vision for the park's ongoing character to continue to be a natural one, with appropriate improvements to enhance the visitor's experience, without intrusions into the basic natural setting.

Thanks for your time...



Nelson Clark, Professional Engineer  
President of Clark, Finefrock & Sackett, Inc.  
Representing Lerner Enterprises

We are in support of the no build option for many of the same, but for additional reasons.

Our Client owns undeveloped lands along both sides of Crystal Rock Drive and our development plans have been in the process for a long time. Zoning and Development Plans were approved in the 1970's. The preliminary plans were first approved for this area in 1988 and were included in the Master Plan adopted in 1989. Access to the park was proposed and shown on the Master Plan in the area of alternate Routes 1 and 2, which would still be acceptable.

However, Route 3 does not take into account properly our proposed development. Route 3 was chosen in part because of a perceived cost differential of 500K out of a total of 4 million. I don't know what cost elements were considered, but I feel this difference will rapidly diminish as well as environmental impacts increase if Route 3 is selected. I feel many elements were overlooked.

Route 3 is drastically opposed to our development plans. Your objective would be to descend the heavily wooded cliffs (70' high in 750 feet of length) as rapidly as possible to minimize environmental impact on the flood plans and reduce the cost of the necessary bridge over Seneca Creek. To the contrary, our objective would be, with your approval, to minimize the impacts to keep our land disturbance much less with none or minimum development over the top of the cliff. The trees in this area are large, if not specimens, ranging in breath to 24 to 36" and larger. Your road would introduce deep cuts and additional setbacks (not considered) from the limits of construction of up to 60 feet or more on both sides and would be necessary to avoid the root systems of these trees along the proposed construction. It would sever our development and/or drastically reduce our ability to develop a high quality project. The two are simply not compatible.

Our clients have dedicated the 500 acres early on that now comprises Black Hill Regional Park and then again dedicated an additional 60 acres along Seneca Creek within the approval of our preliminary plan for FNV in 1988. The impact on our development would be excessive, and I am sure it would diminish the perceived advantage of Route 3 over Routes 1 or 2, if you should choose to select to build a new access road.

**II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK**

Item #	Description and Disposition	Master Plan?
23.	<p><b>Access from Crystal Rock Drive</b> – New vehicular access is recommended in the Germantown Master Plan.</p> <p><u>At the January 6, 2000 Public Hearing, the Board directed staff to study the access road. Staff continued to recommend against the road. At the May 2, 2002 Public Hearing, the Board concluded the road should not be included in the Master Plan.</u> Therefore, this project is not included in the Master Plan recommendations in this location due to the fact:</p> <p><b>Vehicular access at this location would have significant environmental impacts, including the crossing of Little Seneca Creek and the impact to significant forest resources and fragmentation of existing forest communities. Topography is not conducive to this type of connection. This plan does not recommend vehicular access at this location.</b></p>	No
24.	<p><b>Clarksburg Road Special Park</b> - Future development of this parcel is recommended in the Clarksburg Master Plan, and will yield significant acreage for active recreation facilities and potential trail connections between the two arms of the lake.</p>	Yes
25.	<p><b>Bird Observation Areas / Platforms</b> - A number of spots are conducive to observing water fowl and migratory birds due to the natural protection from the elements offered. A few simple interpretive information stations and minor earth work are recommended to make some of the existing observation points more useful and educational for the general public but not obtrusive.</p>	Yes

**3. PUBLIC MEETINGS AND INPUT**

Two general public meetings were held in the course of this study as well as numerous smaller presentations to interested groups. The first public meeting, on June 11, 1997, was a public workshop to acquaint interested parties with the intent of the study and to discuss the basic issues and concerns of attendees. An itemized listing of the comments made by attendees at this workshop is included in Appendix A.1.

The second was a Public Presentation held on May 19, 1998 to present a draft version of the recommendations to be included in the Master/Management Plan. Appendix A.2 includes the minutes of this meeting.

In addition, presentations were given to the Clarksburg Civic Association, Boyds Civic Association, Upcounty Citizens Advisory Council and the Northern Area Recreation Advisory Board to obtain their input on the plan. The following represents a summary of the topics discussed and comments made by meeting attendees and written comments received on the plan. **The following is presented primarily as a record of the statements made by the participants, no representations are made about the accuracy of any particular statement.**

**Overview**

The initial public workshop held in 1997 included a review of the preliminary list of site issues, opportunities and constraints included in Table II-5. Due to a general misunderstanding about the nature of the preliminary listing of potential projects and the master/management planning process, a majority of the attendees were concerned about a perceived emphasis on continued and extensive development of

## II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK

---

Black Hill Regional Park. While the intent of developing the list was to fully explore all options as a means to determine the optimum direction for future development and conservation, the attendees stated at the meeting and in subsequent correspondence their strong objections to additional extensive development in the park. In particular, the participants took issue with the concept of a large group picnic area on the west part of the main body of the lake, new vehicular access to the park, the new maintenance facility and a boat ramp on the southern end of the Clarksburg Road bridge.

The second public presentation made in 1998 elicited a more positive response. Due primarily to the fact that many of the recommendations presented at the second meeting had directly responded to concerns voiced by participants at the first, qualified support for the Master/Management Plan was expressed by a significant number of the attendees. Concerns persisted regarding three definable categories and a few miscellaneous issues. The categories include the need and prioritization for new development, Little Seneca Lake, and trails and greenways. Related to all of these were issues concerning the management of the park's natural resources.

On January 6, 2000, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the Black Hill Master Plan. Testimony was taken from the public on all aspects of the plan. The Master Plan incorporates changes made by staff based on that testimony. At the Public Hearing, testimony was received from the Germantown Alliance in favor of implementing the second point of access to the park from Crystal Rock Drive as shown in the Germantown Master Plan. Based on this testimony, the Board directed staff to study the access road and return with a recommendation. In preparing the Black Hill Master Plan, staff had previously evaluated the access road and had rejected it based on environmental impacts. To respond to the Board's request, staff hired a consultant, Frederick Ward Associates, Inc., to conduct the Park Access Road Study.

Frederick Ward Associates and staff presented the four alternatives for the access road to the citizens at a community meeting on January 16, 2002 at Seneca Lodge. The majority of the questions and comments from the community were related to the Crystal Rock Drive proposal. The majority of the participants that evening were in favor of the "no-build" option.

A public hearing on the Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan and Park Access Road Feasibility Study was held on Thursday, May 2, 2002.

### **RE: Priorities and Needs**

#### Issues

- A large proportion of the people who expressed an interest in the park during the planning period feel the level of recreational development that exists now is appropriate. Criticism was made that the plan is "overshooting the potential of the park"; that this is a "nature park" and the park is already over-developed and over-managed. Further, there is no need for an expanded maintenance facility as the park already has more equipment than it needs. A related question was posed about the need for sewer and water extensions to a new Maintenance Facility when the surrounding area is all on well and septic. One participant in the second meeting even proposed a limit on development be imposed at a much lower

**II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK**

level than the 1/3:2/3 policy prescribes. One reason consistently cited is the unique natural aspects of the park and how that quality of experience is not possible in many other public or private places in this rapidly developing region. Others raised specific environmental issues such as the impacts of continued and expanded development on the water quality in Little Seneca Lake and wildlife found within the park.

- A number of participants expressed a desire for improving existing programs and facilities prior to expanding park development. For example, enhancing educational programs and interpretation of the park's natural and cultural resources was viewed favorably by a majority of the participants.

#### Response in the Master/Management Plan

- The Master/Management Plan incorporates the unique natural character of the site as one of the most important aspects for preservation, enhancement and interpretation. No extensive development facilities outside of areas already developed are proposed with the exception of the expansion of the trail system. However, much of the proposed expansion of the trails are within areas of limited sensitivity or involve upgrading already disturbed trail and use corridors.
- The relocation and expansion of the maintenance facility has long been a priority due to the increasing demands of managing the regional park as well as 21 other park facilities in the region. With this redevelopment, the facility will fall under current environmental regulations that class the facility as an industrial use. Therefore, all waste water must be disposed of through a sewage treatment system or regional sewage collection and treatment facilities.

#### **RE: Little Seneca Lake**

#### Issues

- A number of participants and correspondents are concerned about the long term management of the lake and the high quality fisheries that have developed there over the last decade. For example, specific concerns were raised regarding:
  - How many boats can the lake support?
  - How many fishermen can the lake support?
  - What if the numbers of boats and fishermen doubled?
  - Is hydrilla being managed to increase/decrease distribution in the lake?
  - What is the current condition of the water in the lake?
- The provision of additional access points to the lake, including an additional boat ramp, fishing piers and mooring sites, brought a wide range of comment. Those who regularly use the lake for fishing and boating endorsed the idea of increasing access to the Ten Mile Creek Area. People concerned about impacts on natural resources of the area voiced

## II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK

---

strong reservations about the long term effects of increasing numbers of people on this part of the lake, as well as the impacts of specific placement of proposed boat launches and ramps.

- Requests were made to improve access to existing mooring sites prior to opening additional sites, and to address restroom conditions at the boat launch which are currently handled by portable toilets.

### Response in the Master/Management Plan

- Long term monitoring and sound integrated management of the surrounding landscapes are required steps in assuring that the lake will continue to provide a high quality aquatic resource. WSSC is the responsible agency for the direct management of the lake. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources [MDDNR] participates by managing the fisheries aspects of the lake. M-NCPPC manages the landscape in the immediate vicinity and access to the lake via park property and facilities. The majority of the watershed is in private ownership. The Master/Management Plan can only directly influence the actions and programs of M-NCPPC. However, WSSC has responded that they will likely be undertaking a regular monitoring program at Little Seneca Lake in the near future that can help supply answers to some of the public's questions over time. MDDNR has provided information about the fisheries management of the lake, and fully intends to keep an active role in monitoring and actively managing this part of the resource. M-NCPPC will play a role through continued incorporation of appropriate measures during development of new facilities to prevent unnecessary soil erosion into the lake as well as improving lake shore vegetative buffer areas.
- As part of the monitoring effort, the implications of increasing boat traffic on the lake will be examined and if deleterious effects are observed, M-NCPPC is committed to reducing or limiting the numbers of boats on the lake to the extent practical.
- Specific locations proposed for new boat launch facilities were changed based on citizen and M-NCPPC staff concerns about the effects on particular bird, waterfowl and insect species that frequent the originally proposed location.
- Improvements to the existing boat launch area were considered by the Master Plan Committee and the Utility Feasibility Study recommends options for providing sewer and water service to both the existing and proposed boat launch sites.

### **RE: Trails and Greenways**

- Generally, the attendees and correspondents are supportive of enhancing the trail system within the park and improving connections to the local and regional communities. However, concerns were expressed about a number of site specific instances. For example, it was suggested that the addition of a hard surface trail behind existing residences near the intersection of Black Hill Road and MD 121 (represented on the Master Plan as "3.b.3") will introduce increased crime and trash into the area behind the houses on Black Hill Road. A request was made by a resident in the neighborhood to extend the trail

**II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK**

north along Route 121 to the intersection of Black Hill Road and then designate the roadway for trail use to the east as an alternative. Additional suggestions were made regarding a proposed trail head for Cool Spring Run off of Route 121 including:

- Provide for tree buffer areas in the layout of the parking.
  - Keep the maximum number of cars to a small number.
  - Do not provide water fountains.
  - Close at dusk.
- One attendee made several criticisms including a strong opinion against increasing any black-top paving in the park as it is inconsistent with the character of the facility.

Response in the Master/Management Plan

- The general trail alignments shown in the Master Plan are intended mostly to use already existing cleared areas such as utility corridors and old roads to minimize negative environmental impacts. They are all subject to change and adjustment during detailed design development and construction documentation. At that time, a number of site specific measures can be investigated to determine how to eliminate or mitigate environmental impacts and address concerns of adjacent residences. However, in the case of the alignment near Black Hill Road, it is appropriate to carry both alternatives forward to the next level of planning and design as the cost differences may be such that the original proposal will not be the most cost effective.
- The addition of hard surface trails in the park will not all necessarily be asphalt.

**RE: Miscellaneous Issues**

Issues and Responses: Testimony from the January 6, 2000 Public Hearing is included as Appendix I.

- Request were made for a fenced area for exercising dogs "off-leash". [At the same time, a complaint was made that previous requests in this regard have been ignored. In fact, the Master Plan Committee had considered this request and felt it was inconsistent with the park character and its purpose although it may be appropriate elsewhere in the park system. This was not communicated directly with the correspondent until the second public meeting.] As part of a park-wide study exploring possible locations for dog-parks, Black Hill is being considered for one of these facilities.
- Questions were raised about the size (concern about the type of events that would be staged) and the need (when a natural bowl already exists) and location ("inappropriate" for this park) for the proposed concert amphitheater. The intent of this proposal is merely to improve the site to better accommodate the type and size of concerts that have always been offered at Black Hill Regional Park: small, community concerts or performances.
- A concern was voiced about the location of the proposed Maintenance Facility as the area is used extensively by birders. Regarding the location of the Maintenance Facility, a

## II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK

---

number of sites were investigated by a team of M-NCPPC staff members. The recommended site was selected because of the ability to screen the facility from park users, access to sewer utilities, minimization of disturbance to forested areas, and proximity to the park entrance. Care should be taken during facility planning and design to minimize disruption of the open meadow area through which the access road will pass.

### RE: Park Access Road from Crystal Rock Drive

The Enhanced Vehicular Access Feasibility Study considered three areas in its analysis: community planning, environmental/cultural resources, engineering feasibility and cost. The study resulted in four alternatives, three possible alignments and a "no-build" option. The first, or southern, alignment, located in the proximity of the proposed trail, is least favorable. It is the longest alignment and would have the greatest impact on the natural and cultural environment of the park. The second alignment is an extension of the WSSC Pumping Station access road. The most favorable of all the alignments is the third, or northern alignment, which would require an easement through the Far North Village development that adjoins the park on the east side, but has the least impact on resources and is least costly. The fourth option is to maintain the trail access planned from this side of the park and not to provide for vehicular access. This is referred to as the "no-build" option. At the community meeting, the majority of participants were in favor of the "no-build" option. Interest was expressed by the group for better trailhead parking to access the pedestrian trails into the park at this location. The study report is included in Appendix J.

At the public hearing on May 2, 2002, the Board concluded that the road should not be included in the Master Plan. Testimony from the public hearing is included in Appendix K.

## 4. TRENDS

The challenge during the planning and design process is understanding the trends in our society that will have a major effect on the way we recreate. Only by understanding these trends and addressing them can we be sure that the park will meet needs of future communities. According to the latest recreational research, the following are trends that generally need to be responded to when planning public parks:

### a. **An older population that remains very active**

Recreational planners and designers will need to address the needs of this population by providing activities such as tennis, golf, easy walking trails, comfortable and attractive seating areas, and other leisure activities geared to this older age group. It is well documented that as people age, those who remain active choose less physically demanding pursuits. In many ways the changes may be subtle as in a change from bicycling and jogging to walking. Trail use may be at the same levels as before in terms of quantitative measures but the intensity of the use will be changed. Accessibility will be even more important. Larger print signage, more lighting, smooth grades and shallow slopes should be incorporated wherever possible.

**II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK**

---

**b. Affordable recreation close to home**

Unfortunately, future trends suggest that Americans will be working longer hours but making less money. This is apparently already being borne out in Montgomery County as the median household income has decreased since the 1990 census. This will mean that families will have less time and money to spend on extended vacations and will look to their parks departments to provide a variety of weekend and weekday recreational activities close to home and at an affordable cost.

**c. Lack of funding for recreational facilities**

Funding problems are going to have to be addressed by using innovative thinking. Instituting user fees for park facilities, lower maintenance designs and volunteer programs to help maintain parks are just some examples of what can be done. Privatization is another option that can bring much needed recreational facilities to a park system that does not have the money to develop them.

**d. A diverse community interested in a wide range of facilities**

In addition to the range of economic and family size characteristics mentioned in Section II.A.2. above, Montgomery County and the region adjacent to Black Hill Regional Park are becoming more diverse, and with this diversity comes a need to understand how different cultures use our park system.

For example, the Forest Service's Wildland Recreation and Urban Culture Project in California discovered that Hispanic and Asian park user groups are much larger than the Anglo groups for whom the parks are traditionally planned. This will affect the sizing and capacity of many areas within the park such as group picnic areas and the parking needed to accommodate the larger groups.

Also, a better understanding is needed of the types of recreation that attract the different cultural groups and what is popular with the younger generation. An example of the types of new recreation that are very popular now and should be planned for somewhere within the park system are skateboarding, street hockey, in-line skating and BMX biking.

**e. An increased interest in educational and environmental opportunities**

With the public's increased interest in environmental issues as well as cultural heritage and historic background comes the responsibility of providing environmental and historical/archeological education and interpretation in our park system. The need for Nature Centers and interpretive programs will increase as more families with school age children move to the northern parts of Montgomery County. One important aspect of public education is the positive benefits that a less manicured and maintained park setting has on the ecosystem and also a greater respect for the natural and cultural/historic resources which exist.



**II. BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK**

---

**5. PROS AND COUNTYWIDE PARK TRAILS PLAN GUIDANCE**

Two documents assess countywide park needs and offer policy guidance to meet those needs. The Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, the most recent version of which was adopted in July 1998, is the primary policy document which guides agency decisions on many aspects of park lands. It projects recreational facility needs by Planning Area and countywide for several types of facilities, including: ballfields, playgrounds, pools, and tennis courts. It also addresses Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources protection, parkland acquisition needs, and trails and greenways. The Clarksburg & Vicinity and Germantown areas to the east of Black Hill Regional Park are projected to have high needs for playgrounds and ballfields by the year 2010. The Germantown area falls into the high needs category for tennis courts, while the Clarksburg area is projected to have low needs for tennis courts by 2010. The projected year 2010 needs for playgrounds, ballfields and tennis courts are estimated to be met for the Lower Seneca Planning Area to the west of the Park. Land acquisition needs are specified in the PROS Plan, including proposed acquisitions to expand Black Hill Regional Park. Passive recreation, such as fishing, boating, nature observation, hiking and horseback riding, are recognized in the PROS Plan as important components of the M-NCPPC park system, but the needs for passive recreational facilities are not quantitatively measured. Likewise, the PROS Plan includes goals and policies guiding natural resources protection, but, due to the difficulties of quantitative assessment, needs for these are not enumerated.

The Countywide Park Trails Plan, adopted in July 1998, is the major policy document for the development of a countywide trails system. The Trails Plan did not quantitatively assess unmet trail needs in the county, but relied upon existing surveys and public comments to judge needs and formulate recommendations. The Trails Plan recognizes Black Hill Regional Park as a major recreational destination in the county, and recommends improved trail connections between Black Hill park trails and surrounding communities for greater non-motorized accessibility.

For more information on the PROS and Countywide Park Trails Plan, see Appendix D-2.

**Dearstine, Kathy**

---

**From:** Brackna, Mary Ann  
**Sent:** April 29, 2002 12:05 PM  
**To:** Dearstine, Kathy  
**Subject:** Black Hill Regional Park Master Plan

Kathy,  
As a resident of Germantown I support the no-build option. Part of the enjoyable experience at Black Hill is the current entrance. It is a great transition from the neighboring highly developed Germantown community. A great escape. Destroying a large stand of tress for the mere convenience of saving a few minutes to enter the park is not, in my mind, reasonable reason to build a roadway.

BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK  
ENHANCED VEHICULAR ACCESS FEASIBILITY STUDY  
PUBLIC HEARING  
January 16, 2002

PUBLIC COMMENT PAGE

Name: C. Imperatore

Address: 14411 Christmas Hill Dr Boyds MD 20841

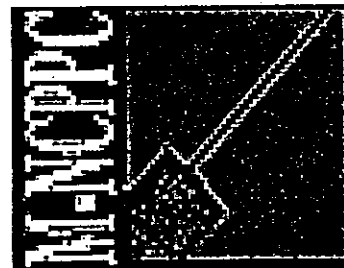
Comments: Although this study was initiated because  
Germanstown's Master Plan shows an additional  
entrance to the Park, and the Park's plan does not,  
the environmental impact of adding any other  
entrance for vehicles (with motors) would diminish  
the quality of the park experience for many more  
people than it would serve.

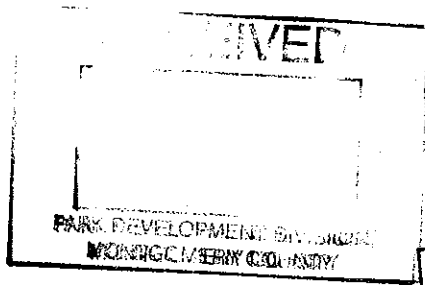
In the master plans for the Boyds and  
Clarksburg communities, capacity and congestion  
of existing roads will be increased anyway. Permit-  
ting encroachment into the park will destroy  
wildlife, plant life and quality of life for those in  
the park, and I do not favor it.

*C. Imperatore*

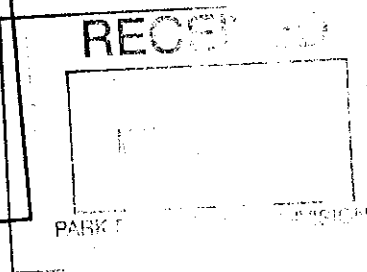
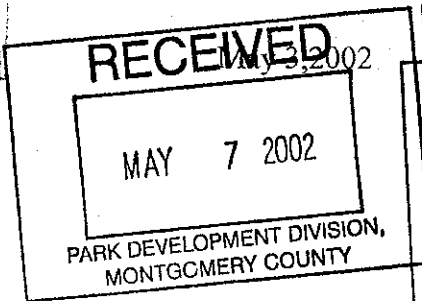
Please return comments page to a representative of Maryland - National Capital  
Park and Planning Commission or Frederick Ward Associates, Inc.

Thank you for participating in tonight's meeting and for your input into the future  
of Black Hill Park.





24101 Frederick Road  
Clarksburg,  
MD 20871



Kathleen Dearstine  
M-NCPPC  
Parkside Headquarters,  
9500 Brunett Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Dear Kathleen,

As a constant user of Black Hill Regional Park, and one who attends the delightful nature programs, I have grave concerns about the proposed roadway from Crystal Rock Drive. Although I can see a walk-in only entrance could be beneficial. If one must have a car, the driving time is just a few minutes to Lake Ridge Drive.

The reason I feel a second roadway entrance should not be built is that it will be used as a commuter usage road when I 270 and Rt. 355 have stand still or slow traffic, which is several days a week. Or a quick lunch time route home for the growing Clarksburg area residents who work in the Germantown area.

**From Clarksburg cars would take Gateway Center Drive and then use Comsat Drive to Old Baltimore Rd, Lake Ridge Drive. If the road through the park was built and available it would be easy to cut through the park to Crystal Rock Drive and on go to Seneca Highway as an alternate route, or re join I-270.**

I'm aware Comsat Drive is supposedly a private gated road but the gates are open from early morning until after rush hour and it is used. Many years ago I was in a car pool that took this route to get a head of traffic, as were many other cars. Comsat Drive, is a short distance from the park entrance, and is known to local residents and folk who work in the area, and the desperation to get out of traffic is compelling. A park roadway would encourage this quicker route.

The beauty of the park needs to be sustained and nourished. A roadway through the park would encourage speeders, crime and destruction upsetting the peacefulness we now find at Black Hill Region Park. I strongly believe a roadway should not be built from Crystal Rock Drive.

Sincerely

  
Kathleen I. Hamm