

Daniela M Perovic and Carlos E. Picone
5506 Jordan Road
Bethesda, MD 20816-1366

March 12, 2003

The M-NCPPC
Attn: Mr. Derick Berlage
Chairman – Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED
0414
MAR 13 2003

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

Re: Church of the Little Flower Field Project at Westland M.S.

Dear Commission members:

We write to voice our concerns and declare our opposition to the Church of the Little Flower's application.

We would first like to state that we do not oppose a soccer field for the children of the School of the Little Flower and the neighbors. We are concerned that the Church owns a very large parcel of land and parking lot that can very well accommodate a green field for soccer while saving the OLD-GROWTH forest at the same time.

We feel that leveling this magnificent OLD-GROWTH forest to build a junior-regulation size soccer field is:

- 1- An action that will cause irreparable harm, since this special forest can not be re-created after the whole topography of these 4 acres becomes altered to accommodate a soccer field.
- 2- Environmentally unsound.
- 3- Will produce a negative impact on property values
- 4- Increase traffic to the neighborhood particularly at the times when peace and quiet time is most valuable
- 5- The field is likely to be used for Catholic Youth Organization games, and we believe that this is the main reason behind Little Flower's School Board insistence pursuing a junior size regulation field (240 x 150 feet) and not willing to compromise for a minimally smaller field (220 x 120 feet) that could easily be accommodated utilizing Little Flower's property and a small portion of the parking lot.

We feel that Little Flower has other possible options as proposed by the M-NCPPC Planning Division, that would greatly reduce the environmental impact, saving many more trees while at the same time providing a sizable green field for practice and enjoyment by the School's children.

Cutting down an old-growth forest is a bad idea. We are now left with fewer and fewer green spaces to enjoy nature in urban areas. This forest is a wonderful, shadowy, moist natural laboratory for enjoyment of children and parents alike where we all get to see nature at work.

Leveling the forest will likely result in:

- 1- Loss of noise buffer from adjacent Wesland Middle School Fields and Massachusetts Ave.
- 2- Storm water runoff concentrated by field drains instead of being spread through the forest and trees root systems
- 3- Loss of temperature-reducing tree canopy
- 4- Loss of significant habitat for birds, insects and plants

Finally, we think that utilizing this land for a field, while losing an old-growth forest is not the best use of public land. We feel that the State should not award any particular interest group with public property. The positive environmental impact of the forest for the neighbors and community at large can not be overstated.

We should not allow a group of parents who can not see beyond their goal of having a soccer field compromise the environment and beautiful topography of these 4-5 acres in a permanent fashion with elimination of a wonderful sanctuary that must be preserved for generations to come.

Very truly yours,



Daniela M. Perovic and Carlos E. Picone
5506 Jordan Rd.
Bethesda, MD 20816-1366

March 12, 2003

Mr Derrick Berlage
Chairman, MN-CPPC
8787 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED
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MAR 14 2003

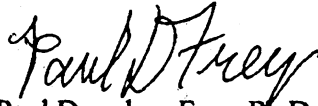
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MONTGOMERY AND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Berlage,

Because I will be unable to attend the Commission hearing on March 20th I am writing to you on behalf of several citizens in the neighborhood around Little Flower Parish (see enclosed signatures on Petition) to ask you to deny the Church's application for permission to take adjacent public land and destroy the trees and natural beauty of that area. It is my understanding that this valuable public land, which is the patrimony of all of the taxpayers of Montgomery County, could be given over to the Little Flower Church and parochial school for the primary (and almost exclusive) use of the members of the parish and their children. My first objection to this is that valuable old trees and habitat will be destroyed.

My second objection is that this giving away of public land to a private religious organization is both unfair in terms of equity for all the taxpayers, and it seems to be clearly in violation of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution of the U.S. It is unfair because as things stand now, anyone can enjoy the use of the County's land in that area. If it is taken by the Church (as the primary custodian or leasee of the land) its use will be restricted greatly for the majority of residents. In other words we taxpayers lose a valuable resource so that the Church can have its desire to hold athletic programs (in effect) subsidized by all of the taxpayers of the County. All the taxpayers will be paying for the primary benefit of the few parish students. We will be going from a situation of equality for usage to a situation of inequality, where some children may benefit (by reason of church affiliation) and others will lose. As you can see, this change would be quite unfair.

My third objection is based on the fact that these tall glorious trees which would be destroyed, are the protectors of our lungs and the air quality in that area. As you must know, those trees are adjacent to the Westland M.S. parking lot where every day many diesel burning, constant motor running, school buses idle their black smoke producing engines. These trees stand between us and the air pollution produced by the fumes of the buses and other vehicles in the parking lot. Trees like these are valuable in so many ways, not least of which is their filtration of pollutants from the air. Would the increased chance of asthma attacks for those vulnerable children who play there, be worth the health costs?


Paul Douglass Frey, Ph.D.
5419 Kirkwood Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816

PETITION TO STOP LITTLE FLOWER PARISH FROM DESTROYING
NEIGHBORING WILDLIFE HABITAT AND 150 YEAR OLD TREES

Little Flower Parish has managed to secure a lease on the adjacent Montgomery County Public Land (next to the large Little Flower parking lot) which contains very old growth white oak and other valuable trees and wildlife habitat. They are about to level this wooded area. These few acres have been used by residents in our neighborhood to access the track and playing fields next to Westland School and to have an attractive walkway to access the GIANT food store and other shops at Westbard. Moreover, this old growth stand of trees is home to uncommon bird species, including the magnificent Pileated Woodpecker, Red Bellied woodpecker, broad tailed hawks and other species.

It takes over one hundred years to create an environment like this, where people and animals can enjoy the cool shade of great trees and the subtle hues of woodland flowers. Little Flower's planned action to destroy this habitat will permanently alter our landscape, and reduce our property values.

Little Flower parish wants to destroy God's own creation to make a soccer field for the few students at the parish school, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A SOCCER FIELD AT WESTLAND BARELY 400 YARDS AWAY. This field and ball playing areas are used by other private schools (e.g. Washington Waldorf School) and can be reserved for usage without much trouble. But this is not good enough for Little Flower.

Please join us in protesting this planned destruction by the Little Flower Catholic parish before it is too late. This petition will be presented to the Archdiocese of Washington to encourage the Archdiocese authorities to stop this immoral action on the part of their priests at Little Flower.

<u>P Douglas Fry</u>	<u>5419 Kirkwood Dr.</u>
<u>Boyce Thompson</u>	<u>5502 Newington Rd.</u>
<u>David J. Jansky</u>	<u>5500 Jansky Rd</u>
<u>Daniela Perovic</u>	<u>5506 Jordan Rd</u>
<u>Carlos E. Picone</u>	<u>5506 JORDAN RD.</u>
<u>MARCELY ROCCA</u>	<u>5512 Jordan Rd</u>
<u>Mindi Jacobson</u>	<u>5402 Kirkwood Dr.</u>
<u>Rodger Jacobson</u>	<u>5402 Kerkwood Dr.</u>
<u>Deanne Loria</u>	<u>5809 Ridgefield Rd</u>
<u>Steph B</u>	<u>5809 Ridgefield Rd</u>
<u>Elizabeth</u>	<u>5813 McArthur Rd</u>
<u>Ashley M. Reed</u>	<u>all Sayward</u>

Preller, Barbara

RECEIVED
0328
MAR 03 2003

From: Cornelia Hyatt [nealhyatt@msn.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2003 1:03 PM
To: MCP-Chairman
Subject: Case number 02202-MCPS-1

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

To whom it may concern: I have recently seen an article which informed me of the impending soccer field at Westland Middle and Little Flower church. I am appalled that this heavily wooded area is again under attack. Slowly over the years, Westland has expanded into this tract of woods. No one outside of the few people working on this site has been informed. I am a member of the Church of the Little Flower, I do not approve of this usage, both for the houses few as they may be overlooking this lovely patch of woods and because of the damage to another stand of beautiful trees. I am also concerned about the possible affects on the drainage, since it is on top of a bluff and would be damaging the natural run off. I wish I had been informed by the Church. I think that this needs to be rethought. Also I doubt that there will be no increase in traffic, simply because "the field would be available for other use after hours".

Thanks for hearing me, I would have communicated sooner had I been informed, but I had to read about in the Journal to find out. I hope this is the right place to send this e.mail.

Cornelia Hyatt
5216 Sangamore Road
Bethesda, MD 20816





THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 28, 2003

TO: Kristin O'Conner, Community Based Planning

VIA: Mary Dolan, Environmental Planning Division 

FROM: Marion Clark, Environmental Planning Division 

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. MR-02202-MCPS-1
Westland Middle School and Church of the Little Flower

The Environmental Planning staff has reviewed the mandatory referral referenced above. Staff recommends **approval** of the submitted plan with the following conditions:

- A Final Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) must be submitted and approved prior to issuance of sediment and erosion control permits. The FCP must address all of the following issues before approval will be granted:
 - 1) The Final FCP shall be prepared by a qualified professional and shall fully meet the directives of MNCPPC Forest Conservation Regulations #1-01, Section 109B. The FCP shall include the delineation of significant and specimen tree critical root zones (CRZ) and determination of significant impacts (greater than 30% encroachment) based on the proposed grading and site plan.
 - 2) The proposed grading and location of the retaining wall shall be adjusted and moved to reduce encroachment on the CRZ of the 45" Black Oak tree (identified as tree no. 30 on the NRI/FSD) to less than 30%. Subject to the Department of Permitting Services the number, size and location of proposed stormwater management structures shall be examined to reduce the total amount of encroachment.
 - 3) After disturbance has been minimized, stress reduction measures shall be identified on the plan, as recommended by the qualified professional. The plan shall identify appropriate stress reduction measures designed to minimize root destruction and maximize root regrowth. Tree save measures shall include, but not be limited to, pre-construction watering and fertilizing, fencing, root pruning and dead wood pruning of any trees impacted by construction activities.
 - 4) Mitigation for forest loss must be indicated on the Final FCP.

Discussion

A previously submitted plan was brought before the Planning Board on June 13, 2002. At this meeting Planning Board modified staff comment to transmit to MCPS a recommendation that the plan be revised to show the activity field located farther west on a reconfigured parking lot. The goals of this request were to preserve a substantial number of trees and locate as much of the field as possible on property owned by Church of the Little Flower. The item was deferred based on applicant's request. MNCPPC staff has worked with the applicant to develop a plan that avoids and minimizes highest priority forest loss¹.

Forest Conservation

The activity field proposed by the applicant is located within a 3.5 acre stand of highest priority² forest as classified by the Forest Conservation Law. The health, composition, and size of trees within this forest stand are unusual in the down county setting of this site. The mature forest stand is dominated by healthy Black Oak, White Oak and Yellow Poplar with an understory composed of Cherry, Red Maple, Beech, Holly, Musclewood, and Dogwood. Most of the trees are between 20" and 30" diameter breast high (dbh), however there are 19 specimen trees (30" dbh and over) and 26 significant trees (24" – 30" dbh). There are two 45" specimen Oak trees on MCPS property, one of which is affected by this plan.

This application comes with an approved Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation. A Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan has been not been approved. The proposed plan removes 4 of 26 significant trees and 4 of 19 specimen trees. The plan removes .62 acres of high priority forest of which .055 acres are on Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) property. Mitigation for forest loss, both on site and off site, must be indicated on the Final Forest Conservation Plan.

Stormwater Management

This site is located in the Middle Mainstem of the Little Falls watershed. Middle Mainstem stream conditions are given a poor rating by the *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy* (CSPS) and habitat conditions are rated poor to fair overall. It is in a Watershed Restoration category where efforts to identify and implement stream restoration opportunities are ongoing.

Full water quality and quantity control is expected to protect the integrity of the Little Falls watershed.

¹ See chart indicating parking and tree save comparisons.

² Highest priority forest stands are those that exhibit all of the following characteristics: high structural and species diversity; few alien or invasive species present; very good overall stand health; and high potential to provide a significant amount of habitat for forest interior dwelling plant, animal and bird species. Additionally individual trees that are specimens of a species are considered highest priority.

MR - 02202 - MCPS - 1
 Westland Middle School and Church of the Little Flower

Parking and Forest Conservation Comparisons

	Existing condition	June 02 Plan	Current submission
Acres of Forest Removed	3.5 ac. extant	1.6 ac. saved	2.88 ac. saved
Total		1.9 ac.	.62 ac.
on MCPS		1.45 ac.	.05 ac.
on church		.46 ac.	.57 ac.
Specimen trees Removed	19 trees extant	4 saved	15 saved
Total		15	4
on MCPS		11	0
on church		4	4
Significant trees Removed	25 trees extant	4 saved	21 saved
Total		21	4
on MCPS		17	1
on church		4	3
Parking Required			
Total	289	289	253