

# MEMORANDUM

July 7, 2003

**To:** Michele Rosenfeld, Associate General Counsel

**From:** Terry Brooks, Special Projects Coordinator  
Carolyn D. Wainwright, Community Services Supervisor

**Re:** Indoor Baseball Proposal: Summary of Public Outreach

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Three public meetings were held at the Cabin John Maintenance Facility in order for representatives of Montgomery Lane, L.L.C. (ML) (the developers) to present their proposal to the adjacent neighbors as well as to the athletic field users in the county.

The first two meetings (January 24 and February 6) were not well attended. The item was then removed from the March 27, 2003 Planning Board agenda, at the developer's request.

ML subsequently requested another meeting with the Planning Board before the end of July. Due to the fact that their proposed facility had expanded from 24,000 square feet to 28,000 square feet in size and the fact that ML indicated they had also conducted a traffic and parking analysis of the impact of their proposed project on the park staff subsequently advertised a third public meeting for June 26, again at the Cabin John Maintenance Facility.

Public outreach for the third community meeting was broadened to include the following activities:

- Direct mail to adjacent residents
- Direct mail to athletic field users
- Direct mail to members of the Western Area Recreation Advisory Board and the County-wide Advisory Board
- Direct mail to 8 community and condo associations
- Direct mail to the members of the Ballfield Work Group
- Direct mail (and e-mail) to all who called, wrote or e-mailed the staff concerning this proposal
- Placement of the announcement on our website
- Placement of the announcement in the Planning Board agenda
- Three community meeting announcement signs posted at the proposed site and in strategic locations in the park
- Press releases announcing the public meeting

This publicity resulted in articles and letters to the editor in the Potomac Almanac, the Bethesda Gazette and the Burtonsville Gazette.

There were more than 140 persons in attendance at the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Most of 25 people who spoke were in opposition to the proposal, citing a number of reasons, not limited to:

- Inappropriate use of limited green space
- Traffic
- Noise
- Unnecessary facility
- Danger to property values

A full summary of the comments made by all speakers is attached.

In preparation for this item being heard before the Planning Board, we have placed signs at the proposed location advertising the public hearing before the Board and will do additional mailings to the list above.

**Public Meeting on Proposed Indoor Baseball Facility at Cabin John Regional Park**  
**Thursday, June 26, 2003**  
**SPEAKERS' COMMENTS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Name of Organization Representing/or self</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
1. Diane Fox	Chelsea Towers	Cede 5 minutes.
2. Jonathan Turak	Westlake Condos "C"	Lovely greenspace – large question – financial - soccerplex struggling – already 3 vendors in county – do not give public land to destroy private vendors – lot of cars coming in park.
3. Dorian Delaney	Chelsea Towers	Keep last greenspace in park – no more development in CJ – Volleyball & handball courts fully used – Bruce has fooled people into believing this is good for kids – Leave the park as it is. Opposed; wants the soccer goals restored; says volleyball court is already used. Adams wants all of CJ as a monument to him.
4. Harriet Cooley	Springlake Condo.	5 minutes.

5. Perla Aizenman	Self Springlake Resident for 29 years	Benefits to population for volleyball, handball & simple pleasures – Wildlife concerns – Have to cut 34 trees – Will increase traffic – Additional parking needed. Opposed; park also for development of other than young minds interested in sports; also concerned about the reduction of wildlife.
6. Morrie Cohen	Westlake Condos "B" President of Board	Area used by many – Supposed to be used by everyone not just baseball – Other suitable areas – Why not Olney or Wheaton – Parking questions – Traffic estimates & budget projections are just projections – What happens when revenues fall off? – Not the time or place for this. 1000 condos within 1 1/2 block of proposed site, not counting Magruder's Choice. Project is faulty with traffic projections and market.
7. Lois Gawler	Self	3 minutes.

8. Kathryn Wharton	Self	3 minutes. Financial projections are questionable – Runs into debts and who picks up the debt – Based on optimistic assumptions. Parking needs to be realistically addressed. Traffic projections not real – Why have private sites not been looked at? What is fair market value for one acre of CJ property? Two major questions – Is there a need? – Will need be met without cost to taxpayers? – No need for project on parkland – How will this ease ballfield use? – Why isn't BCC going to private businesses and building this on private land? – Commission goal should be to keep greenspace. Is this about need or about a special group who wants location? Appalled at paving of paradise – for the general purpose.
9. Norman Knopf	Attorney for all condos: Chelsea Towers Springlake Westlake B & C	16 minutes. Financial projections are suspect; other uses are optimistic; parking and programming not realistic; why not place project on private land. Is there a need? No. 40% of leagues asked if they would use the facility said maybe. Why not put project in places now suffering: Wheaton Ice Rink, Soccerplex?
10. Mary Cushing	Self	Why are we paving paradise?

11. Mike Mahoney	The Hitting Streak	Germantown and Rockville sportsplex – Why not suitable? Free land- why reduced subsidized rent? Why give somebody something because they don't want to drive and put him out of business? – He pays \$12,000/month. Pays \$12,000 a month rent. Why are the Soccerplex and the Rockville Sportsplex not suitable for this idea? Neither are making money. Developer should not get free land subsidized by taxpayers.
12. Irv Nurik	Westlake Condo B, Secretary	Senior citizens have not been considered at all – What will happen to parkland? – Something is wrong in county. Project doesn't consider senior citizens.
13. Harold Black	Westlake Condo/ Towers Resident	Declined to speak. Opposes.
14. Bob Kemelhor	Western Regional Recreational Advisory Board	(Representing self) Some public/private partnerships supported by county have been marginal. Not Boards statement – If building is built – Make sure it is engineered and built for 40 years – Will add to a quality baseball facility.
15. Bea Zuckerman	Self	

16. Gloria Edynak	Self Spring Lake Drive	The proposed space is a meadow of greenery. Choose an up-county area with plenty of space. Appalled and betrayed by this proposal – No logic to build this facility next to facilities already there – Save the ‘meadow’ – To Commission ‘this is shameful’, it is a handout.
17. Richard Mardell	Developer	
18. Donni Shields	Self 7537 Spring Lake Bethesda, MD 20817 301-267-009?	Former Recreation Department employee. Opposed. Demand for baseball/softball down 50% in last 5 years. Has not seen traffic reviews. Hug the trees.
19. Ed Stelzer – CPA	Self Westlake Terrace B 7420 Westlake Terrace Bethesda, MD 301-469-6797 Treasurer	Comptroller for Pollen & US Air Arena; paid real estate taxes and provided water and sewer; also had to provide landscaping. Capital Center builders paid real estate taxes, built sewer and roads – How can they only pay \$20,000/year for real estate taxes and insurance? – Fee \$5000/year ridiculous – What happens if it fails?
20. Kirsten Emigholz	Friends of Cabin John Creek Watershed 301-961-1614	Concerned about impact on development on stream. Concerned on environmental impact on CJ watershed – Commission is steward of stream and should be concerned on impact.

21. David Bushick	Self 7358 Westlake Terrace 301-365-8943	Declined.
22. Lou Bramante	Self 7401 Westlake Terrace	Highly criticized the presentation; parking will be a problem; foot traffic will be difficult; property values will fall; stealing beauty. Developer trying to sell something not real and they know it is not real – Parking issues on Westlake Terrace – What will they offer if property values go down? What right do they have to steal the beauty?
23. Karen Deiblier-Tomasian	Self Chelsea Towers 7401 Westlake Terrace 301-469-6591	Concerned about resell value of property.
24. Bob Koch	Builder, Coach, Resident of Springlake	Balance – development has reached saturation point. The blend of parkland, recreation facilities and residential units has been saturated.
25. Tom Wotring	BCC Baseball President	Spent \$170,000 at Soccerplex; travel is an issue; other existing private facilities don't have the quality capacity this proposal presents. Not a secret. 4600 kids in BCC – Bruce and Sandy Spring have donated thousands of hours and dollars to kids and baseball in the county – Why should they cart kids up 270 to a facility? – Not trying to put anyone out of business – BCC is not a secret organization trying to screw the people of the county.



26. Willard Wishnow	Self 7401 Westlake Terrace 301-469-7025	Declined.
<b>Name</b>	<b>Name of Organization Representing/or self</b>	<b>Address/City/ Zip Code</b>
26. Alex Silva	Restaurant Owner, Bon Apetit	Opposed; this parcel to used by families. Glad people are standing up – Uses park every Wednesday and Sunday.
27. Jean Horan	Secretary of Chelsea Towers	Spoke about lack of notification. Spoke about shortage of bidders. Wants fence to keep people from using private parking. Some of the dealings of this project were underhanded – Not enough notification – If only one vendor replies, look for others – Worried about individuals not being able to use it – How about a nice fence around facility? – Not good communication.