



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

March 28, 2005

Agenda Date: ~~April 14~~, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Lester Straw, Superintendent of Parks *MS*
Michael F. Riley, Chief, Park Development Division *LLS*
MR

FROM: William E. Gries, Land ^{*weg*} Acquisition Specialist

SUBJECT: Land exchange with Montgomery County Public Schools
for Broad Acres and Wood Acres Elementary School
Modernization Projects

BACKGROUND

The Superintendent of Parks has received a letter from Richard G. Hawes, Director, Department of Facilities Management with Montgomery County Public Schools offering an alternative to a previously proposed land exchange between M-NCPPC and MCPS that facilitated building modernization projects at the Broad Acres and Wood Acres elementary school sites. See attached letter dated March 7, 2005.

When these modernization projects were presented to the Planning Board as Mandatory Referrals, the Board was asked to make available for school use certain parkland immediately adjacent to the school sites. Due to the school sites not having enough space to accommodate the proposed improvements, the use of adjacent parkland was essential to allow the modernization projects to move forward.

In the case of the Broad Acres site, 0.09584 acres of parkland is to be converted to school use and in the case of the Wood Acres site, 2.19234 acres of parkland has already been converted to school use. These parkland conversions to school use which totaled 2.28818 acres were reviewed and approved by the Board as the parkland impacts resulting from these conversions were minimally disruptive to the respective parks and replacement land for the parkland lost was to be provided by the MCPS. At the time of the Mandatory Referrals, it was suggested by M-NCPPC staff that the surplus 20-acre Briggs Chaney Middle School site at the corner of Briggs Chaney Road and Good Hope Road near Cloverly was appropriate as replacement land. Copies of the Planning Board's

approval letters on the abovementioned Mandatory Referrals and maps showing the parkland to be converted at Broad Acres, the parkland already converted at Wood Acres, and the originally proposed 20-acre replacement land (Briggs Chaney Middle School site) are attached for the Board's information.

The alternative exchange proposal offered by Mr. Hawes involves substituting the Silver Spring Intermediate School site for the Briggs Chaney Middle School site as the replacement land for the parkland lost to the modernization projects. The Silver Spring Intermediate School site is located at 615 Philadelphia Avenue in Takoma Park and consists of 3.75 acres. This compares with the total 2.28818 acres converted to school use at the Broad Acres and Wood Acres elementary schools. The school building on the Silver Spring Intermediate School site was razed by MCPS in 1991; the site is vacant and fairly level. It has established utility as a recreation area with open play space, tennis and basketball courts, play equipment and a parking lot. The site is already operated, maintained and managed by M-NCPPC as a neighborhood park under an informal use-agreement with MCPS. Fee title ownership in the site is with the Board of Education of Montgomery County.

This alternative proposal is offered by MCPS as a preferred and more suitable exchange option to the Briggs Chaney Middle School site. The Silver Spring Intermediate School site is urban in nature, as are Broad Acres and Wood Acres, and is closer in size to the amount of parkland acreage being made available for school use. Maps of the Silver Spring Intermediate School site are also attached.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board approve the MCPS suggested alternative proposal for the land exchange required by the Broad Acres and Wood Acres elementary school modernization projects. That is, that the Silver Spring Intermediate School site be conveyed to M-NCPPC rather than the Briggs Chaney Middle School site. Staff believes that the Silver Spring Intermediate School site is an important down-county urban open space that should become permanent parkland. Also, the Silver Spring site, though smaller than the Briggs Chaney site, is still large enough to ensure that there will be no net loss in parkland resulting from the land conversions.

This action does not mean that the Briggs Chaney Middle School site will not ultimately become parkland, it only means that it will not become parkland at this time.

With the Planning Board's approval, MCPS will prepare a formal recommendation from the Superintendent to the Board of Education that the Silver Spring Intermediate School be declared surplus and that it be conveyed to Montgomery County government, consistent with established procedures for the disposition of surplus school sites. MCPS will further recommend that the County finally dispose of the site to M-NCPPC. This is the same procedure that would be followed if the Briggs Chaney Middle School site remained as the candidate replacement site.

Staff is of the opinion that since the Planning Board previously approved the parkland conversions described above in public session, as part of regularly scheduled Mandatory Referral items, this action to substitute replacement land for what it originally considered is administrative in nature and does not require further public notice or discussion.