

**Attachment J: Letters and Emails from the Public**

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Gottlieb Gang [mailto:gottliebgang@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2005 6:52 PM

**To:** MCP-Chairman; Newhouse, Rachel

**Subject:** Proposed plans for Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park

**Deborah L. Gottlieb**  
9317 WEST PARKHILL DRIVE  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814

June 7, 2005

Mr. Derick P. Berlage  
Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Subject: Proposed Plans for Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park

Dear Chairman Berlage:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park. I am a 15-yr resident of the Locust Hill neighborhood and have two school age children. The proposed park is neither wanted nor needed in my neighborhood. Its construction would represent a wasteful expenditure of County resources and would be an attractive nuisance inviting non-residents into our quiet neighborhood.

When you consider the value of the proposed park, please be certain to consider the views of the Locust Hill neighborhood. We are the ones who will be directly affected by any such park, and we are the ones who will live with the negative consequences of such a park. Calling this park the Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park is a canard that attempts to hide the fact that it is to be located in the Locust Hill Neighborhood. There is no Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood. I urge you to look at the residence location of all those who submit comments and not consider any comments from outside the Locust Hill neighborhood.

We are blessed to live in a county where a significant number of residents have the wherewithal to provide opportunities for their children to enjoy expensive play equipment. In our Locust Hill neighborhood, many, many families with small children have some of the best play equipment available right in their own back yards. Wouldn't it be better during a time of fiscal restraint to use our County's resources to build a playground in a neighborhood where perhaps families are not as able as we are to provide for their children the expensive play equipment that we can?

Again, I urge you to not approve the proposed park that is proposed to be located at the end of Elmhirst Parkway in the Locust Hill Neighborhood.

Sincerely,  
Deborah L. Gottlieb

-----Original Message-----

From: Judy Woods-Curran [mailto:judywcur@yahoo.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 25, 2005 9:47 PM  
To: Berlage, Derick; MCP-Chairman; Newhouse, Rachel  
Subject: Locust Hill Playground Meeting

Dear Mr. Berlage,

I attended the meeting held by Parks and Planning at the Maplewood community center on Wednesday, May 18. I listened to what Parks and Planning had to say and I listened to what those who are in favor of a playground had to say. The fact remains that we have had more than one neighborhood association vote on this issue, and each time over 50% of the population of Locust Hill voted against having a Playground at Elmhirst Parkway and Broad Brook Drive.

We even formed a Playground Committee that met for the better part of a year. Our goal was to come to an agreement about whether to have a playground in this neighborhood and if so, where it should be placed. A lot of hard work and hours went into the process. It was acrimonious and extremely difficult. In the end there were four separate plots of land that Kathy Dearstein approved as suitable for a playground in the neighborhood, but the proponent's of the playground were only interested in having the equipment placed in the field at Broad Brook and Elmhirst Parkway. Both the proponents and the opponents presented their cases in writing to the neighborhood and a vote was taken, which in itself became complicated and messy. However, the majority of the neighborhood voted in opposition to having a playground or "tot lot" in the field. We have Playground Committee records and minutes of the meetings to substantiate the above, which we are happy to share with the Board.

We have gone through two years of harsh feelings over this issue and those feelings had just recently begun to mend, only to be stirred up again by the recent playground proposal and whomever may be pushing this agenda. Most neighbors have very large yards and have playground equipment in their yard and there are two playground within walking distance, making a playground in the field unnecessary.

It is important to note that all the residents who live on the block closest to the park at Elmhirst Parkway and Broad Brook Drive are unanimously opposed to a playground being placed in that area. Not only are we opposed to the playground, we are strongly in favor of keeping the parkland in it's natural state. We don't want to look out our doors or drive down the street and see playground equipment where once there was a beautiful meadow, consisting only of green space. We also know that once the open, natural space is changed, it is changed forever. For that reason alone, I ask that you please give this further and

careful consideration before marring this beautiful space.

The neighborhood was notified of the meeting and that Parks and Planning was proposing a Playground at Elmshirt and Broad Brook just four to five days in advance of the meeting. Neighbors were shocked that this contentious issue was being revisited and that it is so far along in the process without formal notice to the neighborhood, especially since the Locust Hill Neighborhood Association's President requested in writing that the neighborhood be informed in advance if a playground was proposed in the future.

I'm sure you are aware of SHA's intention to widen the beltway and their plan to put a "water management pond" in this same open area where Park and Planning is proposing putting a playground. Does it truly make sense to build a playground that so many residents don't want, that is so close to a flood plain and will be destroyed when SHA puts their water management pond in place? It seems like a huge waste of taxpayer's money that could be better spent somewhere else.

This field is a neighborhood treasure. It played a significant part in the decisions of many of us to buy homes here. We do not want to see it spoiled and taken from it's natural state by either a water management pond or a playground. Many of us weed and pull down the invasive vines and even mow this piece of land when Parks maintenance crew gets behind schedule. But we feel that we constantly have to fight to keep this beautiful piece of land intact.

Because of the above reasons and because most of the neighborhood just learned that Park and Planning is intending to build a playground that has been voted down by the community on three occasions (once by a show of hands in an Association meeting, once through an email vote and once by secret ballot), we respectfully ask that you please not approve this playground without further consideration and investigation of the history of the issue. We also ask that because many people won't be able to physically attend the Planning Board meeting on June 16 to voice their desires, the Board give equal weight to the letters and emails that you receive from residents and that the letters be read in the meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Judy Woods-Curran  
4702 Broad Brook Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20814

301-571-9573

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-----Original Message-----

From: Judy Woods-Curran [mailto:judywcur@yahoo.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, May 24, 2005 2:38 PM  
To: Newhouse, Rachel  
Subject: Proposed Playground in Locust Hill

Dear Ms. Newhouse,

We will write a letter to Mr. Berlage in protest of the new playground as you suggested, but I really wanted to bring up to you the issue of all the things that were stated by Parks and Planning when we formed the Playground Committee and were trying to reach some sort of reasonable compromise two years ago.

As a committee, we looked at several plots of parkland in the community. Kathy Deerstein and other Park and Planning employees surveyed our neighborhood and Kathy approved several plots that were suitable for a playground or tot lot. They are located in the field at Rockville Pike and Elmhirst Drive, a spot along the bike path, a spot along Elmhirst Drive, and a spot BEHIND the large pine at the top of the park at Broad Brook and Elmhirst Parkway (We have Committee records to verify this). Never was there a proposal to put the playground in the field at Elmhirst and Broad Brook in full view of the street.

In the end, the "pro-playground" folks would only consent to the playground being placed at Broad Brook and Elmhirst Drive. That was the spot they wanted from the beginning and really weren't interested in pursuing any of the other less contentious areas. However, it was voted down in the neighborhood vote, and we had a prior agreement that if it was voted down, it would not be resurrected again. (This was actually the third time that it was voted down -- once by a show of hands in a Locust Hill Neighborhood Association meeting, once in an email vote and once by secret ballot). The Locust Hill Neighborhood Association also made a formal request of Parks and Planning that the association be notified in advance if a proposal for a playground was being considered in the future. Obviously, neither of those things have been honored.

All of this is disturbing, but it adds insult to injury that the proposal now has the playground in full view. In the meeting on May 18, Kathy Deerstein stated that the playground would not be placed in the back of the park. She stated that she "would not build a playground that is not visible from the street". This is in direct contradiction to what she told us before and what she APPROVED as a suitable place. (If you have her email address and phone number I would appreciate your sending it to me)

Kathy also assured the neighborhood that there would not be a sign for the park. And never was there any

plan to build a bridge to the bike path. She also assured the neighborhood that Parks would not go forward with a plan to build a playground if the neighborhood voted against it. She said that there were plenty of neighborhoods that wanted a playground and that Park and Planning was not interested in forcing a playground on a neighborhood that is opposed.

There were also several things said in that meeting by residents that were not true. Since I did not sign up to speak, I did not feel as though I could or should get on my soap box. However, I do feel the need to set the record straight here:

- Gabriella Doyle stated that there are 200 children in Locust Hill. There may be two-hundred children who are from 1 month to 25 years, but there are definitely not 200 children under 12 in this neighborhood.

- Carol Bleecker stated that those who live near the parkland think it is an extension of our property. While we do take care of it by weeding, removing vines from the trees, even mowing, none of us feel that it is our property. We simply want to keep it as it is and as healthy as possible. There are too few green untouched areas left. Carol also described those of us who oppose the playground in a negative way by saying that we don't want "outsiders" to come into the neighborhood. She didn't mention that the main reason that citizens don't want "outsiders" driving through is that they are largely people that cut through our neighborhood at rush hour at a high rate of speed, failing to stop at stop signs and generally causing a hazard to school children who walk to and from school and buses, and who ride their bikes in the neighborhood.

I really do hope that you and your colleagues look into the history of this issue. We worked very hard on a Playground Committee, meeting weekly for a year. It was difficult and exhausting. (I commuted back and forth to New York at the time and on a couple of occasions had to change business meetings in order to be in Bethesda for the committee meeting, which a playground proponent had asked to be changed. We took this issue very seriously). We have many committee records that you are welcome to review. I hope that we didn't waste our time and energy, only to be overridden for some reason known only to Parks and Planning and possibly a vocal few in the neighborhood.

I would appreciate an acknowledgement of this email. Also, because a lot of people won't be able to attend the meeting on June 16, especially if it is during the day, I would like your assurance that citizens' letters will carry equal weight and importance with the Board as personal appearances will carry. And we would appreciate these letters being read in the Board meeting.

Thank you,

Judy Curran

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Minndax@aol.com [mailto:Minndax@aol.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 24, 2005 12:03 PM

**To:** Newhouse, Rachel

**Cc:** Minndax@aol.com

**Subject:** Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park

Dear Ms. Newhouse,

I am writing to express my **STRONG OPPOSITION** to creation of an Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park with playground equipment. There are two other playgrounds within walking distance. Access to the proposed playground involves travel across a flood plain ... a poor site to spend your/our monies. A few vocal, local residents tried repeatedly to gain our citizens association's support for such a playground. They failed and apparently now are pestering the MNCPPC to do something that many of their neighbors oppose... in spite of the fact that we had a tacit agreement not to bring this matter up again if the citizens association would not support it. Also, we were advised by MNCPPC staff that if this question came up again, we would be notified well in advance... we were not.

I would certainly have attended and spoken at your neighborhood meet concerning this matter on May 18th. But your meeting notice was postmarked just 6 days before the scheduled May 18th meeting, I was out-of-town on business travel, and only received your meeting notice after I returned and the subject meeting was over. In fairness to all, you need to allow more than 6 days advance notice of such meetings.

Accordingly, I request an opportunity to register my views at the upcoming Planning Board meeting where this matter will be discussed.

Howard A. Minners, M.D., 4700 Locust Hill Court, Bethesda, MD 20814-3959

-----Original Message-----

**From:** PhysClay@aol.com [mailto:PhysClay@aol.com]

**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2005 8:54 PM

**To:** Newhouse, Rachel

**Subject:** 2nd e-mail re Elmhirst Parkway Park; this with a signature!

Dear Ms Newhouse:

I am a Locust Hill citizen firmly opposed to the above park. By now you probably have been informed of the rancor which this issue has caused in our neighborhood. Several people have told me they plan to write both you and Derick Berlage about the background of this issue and of their opposition.

So I will not repeat that history or assume their reasons for opposing. My comment to the Advisory Board and the Planning Commission is that they take both a broader and a longer range view of this issue.

First, we already have a perfectly fine park at the corner of Cedar Lane and Beach Drive which I enjoyed with my 2 children more than 30 years ago. (And yes, thank you on behalf of the new generation for making improvements to that park over the years.) Why spend money on

duplication when existing parks and ecological areas could use the money for maintenance and improvements.

Secondly, this proposed park will be too exclusive by reason of its location and limited parking. Tax money should be spent for recreational facilities which will benefit more families through visibility, accessibility, and parking availability.

Please do not assume that those who speak with the most strident voices represent the preference of the neighborhood. I am also informing Derick Berlage of my opposition.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Drachman  
9311 West Parkhill Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20814

-----Original Message-----

**From:** JENeave3@aol.com [mailto:JENeave3@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 15, 2005 12:08 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman  
**Subject:** Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park

Dear Mr. Berlage,

My family and I were so excited to read the flyer about getting a park in our neighborhood! We have a 5, 7, and 9 year old. Every child should have a safe access to a playground. The terrible accident at Cedar and Beach was a tragic reminder of how dangerous it is for our children to cross busy roads. We have a wonderful neighborhood and this playground will be a great gift for our children. We are unable to attend the planning meeting but wanted the county to know how thrilled we are to be getting a playground in our neighborhood! Thank You,

John and Joyce Neave  
4808 Enfield Rd

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Camille Taft [mailto:taft5@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2005 5:11 PM  
**To:** Newhouse, Rachel  
**Subject:** Fw: Playground Issue in Locust Hills Estate

> Attached please find a letter that was forwarded from Judy Woods-Curran.

> In

> an effort to not rehash the same statements and comments that were so  
> accurately stated please add our names to the list opposing this new  
> proposed park. We were involved in the initial visit of this proposal  
and

> we concur that it divided the community and the results netted a "NO".  
> This was a shock to have this letter delivered to our home!

>

> Camille and Robert Taft  
> 9326 West Parkhill Drive  
> Bethesda, MD 20814

>

>>> --- Judy Woods-Curran <judywcur@yahoo.com> wrote:  
>>> Date: Sun, 1 May 2005 21:51:27 -0700 (PDT)  
>>> From: Judy Woods-Curran <judywcur@yahoo.com>  
>>> Subject: Playground Issue in Locust Hills Estate  
>>> To: mcp-chairman@mncppc-mc.org,  
>>> Lester.Straw@MNCPPC-MC.ORG  
>>>

>>> The following letter has been sent via US Mail with  
>>> attachment to Mr. Berlage and Mr. Straw:  
>>>  
>>> 4702 Broad Brook Drive  
>>> Bethesda, MD 20814  
>>>  
>>> May 2, 2005  
>>>  
>>> Mr. Derick Berlage, Chairman  
>>> Planning Board  
>>> MNCPPC  
>>> 8787 Georgia Avenue  
>>> Silver Spring, MD 20910  
>>>  
>>> Dear Mr. Berlage:  
>>>  
>>> A group of MNCPPC employees were recently observed  
>>> surveying the open field parkland at the  
>>> intersection  
>>> of Broad Brook Drive and Elmhirst Parkway in Locust  
>>> Hill Estates. When questioned as to their  
>>> activities,  
>>> they replied that they were preparing to relocate  
>>> the  
>>> "Secret Park Playground" to this location at the  
>>> direction of the Chairman of Park and Planning.  
>>>  
>>> Please see our attached letter of May 2, 2003  
>>> (exactly two years ago) concerning building a  
>>> playground in Locust Hill Estates. To recap, the  
>>> neighborhood of Locust Hill Estates went through an  
>>> extremely stressful and contentious year concerning  
>>> whether or not a playground would be placed in the  
>>> parkland or "field" at Broad Brook Drive and  
>>> Elmhirst  
>>> Parkway. A committee was formed, meetings were  
>>> held,  
>>> animosity grew, hate mail and hate emails ensued,  
>>> neighbors were pitted against neighbors, a vote was  
>>> finally taken and the playground was voted down. It  
>>> has taken the neighborhood two years to begin to  
>>> recover from this debacle.  
>>>  
>>> Before and during the committee process and after  
>>> the  
>>> playground was voted down, we were assured by Park  
>>> and  
>>> Planning that a playground would not be installed if  
>>> the majority of the neighborhood was opposed. We  
>>> were  
>>> also assured that if Park and Planning was  
>>> considering  
>>> installing playground equipment, that the residents  
>>> of  
>>> the neighborhood would have the opportunity to be  
>>> heard in a Planning Board meeting. We also  
>>> requested  
>>> in writing that Park and Planning notify the Locust  
>>> Hill Citizens Association if a playground was being  
>>> considered.



>>>  
>>> You can imagine our surprise when we learned,  
>>> through  
>>> no formal communication from Park and Planning, that  
>>> Park and Planning was in the process of planning a  
>>> playground in the parkland at Broad Brook and  
>>> Elmhirst  
>>> Drive. We are not only surprised; we now feel that  
>>> our sense of fairplay has been violated and that we  
>>> cannot trust the system, the statements of Park and  
>>> Planning representatives, nor the process that we  
>>> have been led to believe is appropriate.  
>>>  
>>> This a serious violation of public trust and one  
>>> that  
>>> will undoubtedly cause more outrage and harsh  
>>> feelings  
>>> within this community. We have to ask why Park and  
>>> Planning would choose to pursue this issue again,  
>>> especially absent the neighborhood's desire for such  
>>> a  
>>> playground? Doesn't anyone who is involved at Park  
>>> and  
>>> Planning remember how difficult and divisive this  
>>> situation was?  
>>>  
>>> While it is true that the residents of Bellevue want  
>>> the "secret" park playground rehabilitated (we have  
>>> been told by Park and Planning that is not possible  
>>> because of restricted access), they do not want a  
>>> playground at Broad Brook and Elmhirst Parkway.  
>>> Placing equipment there is not an answer to their  
>>> issue.  
>>>  
>>> Our letter may be one of the first you have  
>>> received,  
>>> but there are sure to be more when more people learn  
>>> of your plans. Few people know of your plans but  
>>> those  
>>> who do know are already talking about legal  
>>> proceedings. We ask that you please reconsider what  
>>> you are planning to do and the impact on this  
>>> neighborhood.  
>>>  
>>> Sincerely,  
>>>  
>>>  
>>> Joseph L. and Judy Curran (301)571-9573  
>>>  
>>> Cc: Mr. Lester Straw  
>>>  
>>>  
>>> \_\_\_\_\_  
>>> Do You Yahoo!?  
>>> Tired of spam? Yahoo! Mail has the best spam  
>>> protection around  
>>> <http://mail.yahoo.com>  
>>>  
>>> \_\_\_\_\_  
>> Do You Yahoo!?  
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>> <http://mail.yahoo.com>>

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dow and Debbie [mailto:berggren@erols.com]

**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2005 12:07 PM

**To:** MCP-Chairman

**Cc:** Newhouse, Rachel

**Subject:** Locust Hill Neighborhood Park

Attention: Mr. Derick P. Berlage, Chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Board

Dear Mr. Berlage:

The purpose of this email is to advise you of the continuing desires of many in the Locust Hill Resident Association to retain and maintain the existing Locust Hill neighborhood park. I have been in continuing conversations with Peter Dettinger and Ronnie Gathers of the Park and Planning Maintenance staff with regard to this maintenance problem. Please do not support a new replacement neighborhood park requiring new resources when we have an older facility begging park maintenance attention.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Dow Berggren  
9619 Bellevue Drive  
Bethesda, MD 20814

**MCP-Chairman**



**From:** Debbie Teicher [d.teicher@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2005 6:53 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman  
**Subject:** Locust Hill proposed park

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

Mr. Berlage,

I applaud whomever has brought up for discussion the idea of a public park with a play area in the Locust Hill Estate development! A park would be a great addition for the community. I have three children all who would benefit tremendously from having a safe, designated play area within walking distance. Because of our proximity to Rockville Pike it is impossible for us to comfortably allow our children to play out-front. In addition with no crosswalk at Alta Vista, it is impossible for them to visit the Alta Vista/Maplewood park.

I know there is very vocal opposition to this proposal and I am sorry that I can not attend the meeting. I hope that this email reads as passionately and as loudly as those who might have negative comments. As our world becomes more disconnected and we read countless articles and hear numerous news reports about children without community, who simply sit on couches and suffer from obesity, would we not be better served by building safe, local parks for children to play in and feel secure? I would suggest that those who worry about "outside" people using the park remember that any time they go to another park are they not "outsiders" too?

We pay our taxes to build and improve on our community -- this park could be just such an improvement.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate you considering this opinion.

Ben and Debbie Teicher  
4849 Broad Brook Dr.

**MCP-Chairman**

---

**From:** Steve Volz [svolz@nasa.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2005 1:47 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman  
**Cc:** Newhouse, Rachel  
**Subject:** A Playground for Locust Hill!!!!  
**Importance:** High

RECEIVED  
0744  
MAY 18 2005

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

Dear Mr. Berlage,

We received with delight the flyer from the Montgomery-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announcing the proposal for a new playground in the Locust Hill community. We live somewhat isolated on the eastern edge of Locust Hill community, on busy Cedar Lane (9202 Cedar Lane) and see the establishment of a central playground as really helping to create a central gathering locale for the overall neighborhood. We also have two young girls, M<sup>aire</sup> age 5 and Geneviève age 7, who will dearly love to play and explore the playground and trails leading to it, especially the bridge over the creek. We will love knowing they can get to and from the playground without having to cross busy Cedar Lane (to get to the Stone Ridge School playground) or to go through the dark and noisy tunnel under the Beltway (to get to the playground at Beach Drive and Cedar Lane).

We know that you have received some mixed signals from our community regarding the park, and we want you to know that we really appreciate your perseverance in keeping this issue on your agenda and looking out for the best interests of our community.

We definitely plan to attend the meeting Wednesday when the M-NCPPC will present the proposal to the community for comment, and look forward for the opportunity to speak and express our interest and appreciation. Thanks again for your leadership and efforts.

Beth and Steve Volz  
9202 Cedar Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 571-0550  
svolz@nasa.gov

## MCP-Chairman

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**From:** Steve Volz [svolz@nasa.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2005 12:49 PM  
**To:** Newhouse, Rachel  
**Cc:** MCP-Chairman  
**Subject:** Thanks for the Playground!!!  
**Importance:** High

Dear Ms. Newhouse,

We wanted to say how excited and absolutely thrilled we were to see the announcement from the M-NCPPC about the playground for our neighborhood. We have two daughters, Máire age 5 and Geneviève age 7, who love to run and play outside but have really missed not having a safe and convenient playground nearby. We live on Cedar Lane (9202 Cedar Lane) and so have to deal with the high volume of traffic virtually all the time on that road and we worry all the time about one of them wandering into traffic and getting hurt or worse. Traveling to the other local playgrounds, at Stone Ridge and at the corner of Beach Dr and Cedar Lane, would either require the girls to cross Cedar Lane or to traverse the dark tunnel under the beltway. Quite frankly both options are scary even when one of us carries Máire! Being able to walk on back roads to a playground within our own community would be a godsend. We also love the other features you added in your draft of the play area, with an extended play area for running and strolling along the creek. Geneviève really loves nature and we can already see her spending hours and hours investigating all kinds of creepy, crawling things in and around the creek. She already has overturned every rock in our large yard looking for all signs of life.

One question we have is if there is some way you could add better access to the playground for our neighbors living on Ashburn and Bellevue. We live on the east side of Locust Hill so the nice bridge you have drawn will be great for us, but the northwest side of our community is pretty isolated. Would it be possible to update or add a path through the old (now derelict) playground behind 9621 Bellevue Drive into the upper corner of the playground area to make it easier for Bellevue and Ashburn to get to this new playground? Just a thought.

Beth and I, with Geneviève and Máire, plan to attend the meeting Wednesday night and welcome the chance to speak up in favor of this wonderful proposal. Thank you again for making it a possibility for us and for our neighborhood.

Steve and Beth Volz  
9202 Cedar Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
(301) 571-0550  
svolz@nasa.gov

**MCP-Chairman**

**From:** Norman, Barbara (NIH/NEI)[E] [NormanB@NEI.NIH.GOV]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2005 1:16 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman; Newhouse, Rachel  
**Cc:** Lester.Straw@mncppc-mc.org; Berlage, Derick  
**Subject:** Proposed Plans for Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park

RECEIVED  
0746  
MAY 19 2005

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

We are writing to oppose any plans to change the current use, or to develop in any way, the open space at the intersection of Broad Brook Drive and Elmhirst Parkway. This is one of the very few open green spaces in our area and we believe that adding playground equipment would only serve to diminish this valuable resource.

Concerning the replacement of the playground located at the Locust Hill Neighborhood Park, we have lived in Locust Hills since 1975 and we have never been aware that the lack of this equipment was an issue.

Two years ago our Citizens Association voted on whether or not to develop this area into a playground. The majority voted against development. The issue was very divisive, causing enormous ill-feeling among neighbors. We would not like to see this issue brought up again. Please leave our park as it is.

Leslie & Barbara Norman  
4836 Broad Brook Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814

## MCP-Chairman

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**From:** Dowd, Mary Joanne [Dowd.Mary@ARENTFOX.COM]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2005 4:35 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman  
**Cc:** Newhouse, Rachel  
**Subject:** Proposed Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park

Dear Mr. Berlage and Planning Board Members,

I am firmly opposed to the proposed park in the Elmhirst Parkway neighborhood.

I am a long time resident, having moved into the neighborhood in 1987. I have three school age children. I walk in the neighborhood, including on the hiker-biker pathway, on a nearly daily basis. My son and other children use the open field now to play pickup football.

First, the proposed site is one of the few open, undeveloped sites in the neighborhood. It provides a lovely and needed buffer to the adjacent Beltway. Development and removal of trees, and the addition of parking and a bridge over the creek would increase the noise level and destroy the natural ambience.

Second, the neighborhood suffers from traffic as is. It does not need any additional draws to the neighborhood.

Third, it is simply an unnecessary use of resources. All of the homes in the neighborhood have ample backyards. All are within walking distance of the playground on the other side of the Beltway. Many use the private playground at StoneRidge on evenings and weekends.

Fourth, approximately two years ago the Locust Hill Neighborhood Association polled members regarding interest in such a playground at that site. The majority of those voting were against the playground. Contrary to your expectation, the proposal is therefore not conducive to community relations.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Mary J. Dowd  
4805 Enfield Rd.  
Bethesda, MD 20814

My name is Carol Bleecker and I have lived at 4822 Broad Brook Drive for over 20 years. When I first moved into the neighborhood my daughter was only two years old. We discovered the "secret" playground by accident a couple of years after we moved in. It was already in disrepair and difficult to access, not to mention somewhat scary, as hidden from public view as it was. Because even then it was dangerous to walk to the playground at the corner of Cedar Lane and Beach Drive, we would drive to Cabin John Park. After all, once we were in the car, it only made sense to go to a playground with a large assortment of equipment. How nice it would have been to have had a neighborhood park that we could have safely walked to.

The county-owned field at the end of Broad Brook Drive is a logical and safe place for a small neighborhood park. Over the years, it has come to be seen as near private property by some Locust Hill residents. Of course, it is not. This park land is used by some residents to hit golf balls and many others to exercise their dogs unleashed. While hitting golf balls is illegal and clearly dangerous if children are present, there is no reason why the dogs and a playground can't co-exist as long as the dogs are controlled. Or, no reason why children shouldn't take precedence over dogs.

Over the years, I have been dismayed to see this community move to wall itself off more and more. From wanting to treat the roads as private and for residents' use only, to preventing parking by non-residents, to lobbying against a playground for fear that it would encourage "outsiders" to enter the neighborhood to use it. Aside from the fact that I seriously doubt that anyone getting into a car to drive to a playground would decide to drive to one as small as that proposed here, Locust Hill Estates is not a private gated community and should not be treated as such. We are talking about public land that everyone has a right to access and use, not just a select few.

My daughter outgrew the need for a playground long ago. Nevertheless, I strongly support a neighborhood park on the Broad Brook Drive/Elmhurst Parkway public land. It is the right thing to do for the children and the community.

*Carol F. Bleecker*  
*May 18, 2005*