

Facility right-of-way, the entire area should be acquired and managed as a park.

PARCELS OR AREAS WITH COMMENTS

14 *Robert E. Peary High School*

The 19.52-acre site is located on the western side of Arctic Avenue (Figure 24). The site is zoned for single-family detached houses on 9,000-square-foot lots. The property is bordered by single-family detached houses to the north and east. A church and the Frost Center school site are to the south. The Rock Creek Stream Valley Park borders the site to the west.

After years of neglect, the Peary High School building in its present condition is no longer an asset to the Aspen Hill community. Peary High School graduated its last class in 1984. In 1987, after the Board of Education turned the site over to the County as surplus property, the County Executive proposed that the auditorium and gymnasium wings of the building be renovated, the remainder of the building be demolished, a new connecting piece be constructed between the auditorium and gymnasium wings and that the facility be used as a combination regional recreation center, children and youth services center and fine arts center. Before that recommendation could be fully acted upon, the Board of Education requested that the site be transferred back to them so that the facility could once again be used for public education. Funding to renovate the building to serve as a holding school was not available at the time it was requested. In 1994, the Board of Education is once again considering giving the site to the County as surplus property. The building has been unoccupied since 1988. Positive action is now required to restore the building and site for the benefit of the County and the neighboring community.

The reuse of Peary High School as a public school, if such a need is found by the Board of Education, would be the most desirable future for the site. In any event, if the site is sur-

plused by the Board of Education, it should be kept in public ownership. If a determination is made that it is not needed as a public school, any use of the site that would not preclude its eventual reuse as a public school would be desirable. Such uses include, but are not limited to, a private school, a specialized indoor recreational facility and the use of the auditorium for theater productions and other community use. It is conceivable that only a portion of the structure would find qualified tenants acceptable to the public owner. To the extent that the building is not renovated and not used, it should be considered for demolition.

Consideration should also be given to adding the site into the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park to provide additional playing fields. Regardless of who controls the site, the existing outdoor recreation facilities should be repaired and made available for public use.

15 *Rock Creek Village Shopping Center*

The 9.39-acre neighborhood center is located in the southwest corner of the Norbeck Road and Bauer Drive intersections (Figure 25). The center has approximately 89,000 square feet of gross retail space. It is bordered to the south by townhouses and condominiums. To the northwest, there is a small strip of unimproved land that is a residual from the Norbeck and Baltimore Roads improvements.

There is a perception that the rear parking lot is inaccessible and unsafe. The shopping center previously had two points of access from the rear lot to the front parking lot. One of those entrances was closed to create additional retail space, leaving one access point to serve the entire parking lot. Efforts should be made to correct this situation and improve access to this parking lot.

The existing two-way light at the shopping center's entrance on Bauer Drive near the supermarket only stops traffic on Bauer Drive. It is activated by pedestrians crossing Bauer Drive. This light is near the crest in the road-

ATTACHMENT 4

September 7, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Khalid Afzal, Georgia Avenue Team Leader
Community Based Planning Division

VIA: Jeff Zyontz, Chief, Countywide Planning Division

FROM: Tanya Schmieler, Planning Supervisor

**SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON THE SALE OF THE FORMER PEARY HIGH SCHOOL
TO THE HEBREW ACADEMY OF GREATER WASHINGTON**

The former Peary High School includes outdoor athletic facilities that are essential to the community, including a full size football / soccer field and circumferential track, and tennis and multi-use courts. It is adjacent to Aspen Hill Local Park.

The Council approved the sale of the school contingent on continuing access by the community to the gymnasium auditorium and playing fields through the office of Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF). The proposed deed indicates that weekdays after 6:00 p.m. and weekends should generally be available for community use.

It is suggested that instead of a sale, the County consider retaining the outdoor recreation space with a long term lease of the recreation facilities. The lease should require continued community use through CUPF and maintenance by the tenant. There is currently a long term lease on the building and land which appears to have worked well.

It is questionable whether open space and recreation facilities that benefit the general public should be sold, particularly when it is in an urban area and adjacent to an existing park. It is possible that the ballfield initiatives program may want to consider future lighting/and or artificial turf of the football/soccer field. Although county shortage of rectangular fields are severe, lease of the property to the tenant would still preserve the field. It would not appear feasible to convert this area to parkland at this time, as the primary user would be a private school.

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cc : Bill Mooney