



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

April 27, 2011

Mr. Christopher S. Barclay
President, Board of Education
Montgomery County Public Schools
Carver Educational Services Center
850 Hungerford Drive, Room 123
Rockville, Maryland 20850

REF: BCC Middle School Number 2 Site Selection

Dear Mr. Barclay:

It has come to our attention that on April 28, the Board of Education will be considering the selection of a site for development of a new middle school to serve the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, and that Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park and Rock Creek Hills Local Park are the first and second choices identified by the site selection committee. We are also aware that other parks within The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County park system are being considered as locations for other schools, including a new elementary school site in Germantown that could affect South Germantown Recreational Park.

The Montgomery County Planning Board has unanimously agreed that these are not suitable uses of existing parkland, and recently voted specifically to object to the selection of Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park for conversion to a school site. We also have serious concerns about the overall MCPS site selection process as it relates to identifying parkland for school sites.

Background

The "Policy for Parks," as adopted in 1988 by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, states: "*Lands and facilities under the control of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission are held as a public trust for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations. The Commission is pledged to protect these holdings from encroachment that would threaten their use as parkland. The Commission recognizes that under rare circumstances non-park uses may be required on park property in order to serve the greater public interest.*"

M-NCPPC has a fiduciary duty to the public to protect and preserve parkland. We recognize there may be, on rare occasions, a higher public interest to which we must defer. However, we are not inclined to accept a routine school site location as such an exception. Moreover, even in the rare instance where a higher public interest justifies converting parkland to a non-park use, there is an expectation that equivalent land will be provided for park use in exchange, along with funds to recreate amenities that are lost with the loss of parkland.