



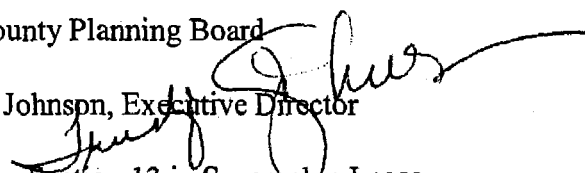
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item: A  
January 12, 2006

MEMORANDUM

January 6, 2006

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

FROM: Trudye Morgan Johnson, Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Request to Waive Section 13 in Soccerplex Lease  
Operations and Management of Soccer Facilities

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approve as an operating pilot, the scheduling of 100% playing capacity of 16 of 17 soccer fields on the weekends during the 2006 spring and fall soccer seasons at the SoccerPlex, pending revisions to the lease between the Maryland Soccer Foundation and the Commission.**

Authorization is needed by February 1, 2006, to facilitate scheduling the spring soccer season. The Commission and the Maryland Soccer Foundation (MSF) are in the process of amending the current lease, however, this effort needs to be done in a deliberate way with appropriate time for public input and discussion and, therefore, will not be complete in time to support the spring soccer schedule. Specifically, the Planning Board is requested to authorize the Executive Director to transmit by letter a waiver of Section 13 in the lease subject to the conditions listed below.

- Notification to community by MSF of increased games and their potential impact
- Compliance with traffic mitigation strategies to include coordination of soccer tournaments and swim meets scheduling to avoid overlap by MSF and the Recreation Department
- Notification to the PHED Committee of the "pilot game increase" and pending lease amendment by the Planning Board with notification to follow to the County Council

**Background:** On regular league weekends, the MSF may only permit use of 75% of the field capacity and rest the remaining soccer fields which results in 25% of the fields being idle. The lease provides for full 100% use of fields on tournament days. This provision was provided in the lease to mitigate potential adverse traffic impact on adjacent neighborhoods at the time of developing the new park. A secondary purpose of this clause is to ensure high quality playing conditions on the SoccerPlex fields. At present, the lease gives waiver authority of playing capacity on a case-by-case only basis to the Park and Planning Director.

As you are aware, a serious dispute occurred last fall between the MSF and its Affiliate Clubs. At the core of the dispute was the per game cost to play at the SoccerPlex and allegations of certain managerial and operational concerns. These concerns were resolved through mediation as well as a reduction in game costs. The fee reduction was made possible by a very generous financial contribution from the Hendricks' Foundation to the MSF.

In staff's opinion, the MSF is on a much sounder financial foundation due to the Hendricks' donation, which includes a game subsidy to reduce costs for the affiliate teams for five years, and reserves for capital and operating expenses. The Foundation has decided to advance the construction and build-out of the final five soccer fields, merging Phases II and III of their field development schedule. MSF hopes to commence field construction in the spring/summer of 2006. The Commission's FY07 Capital Improvement Program has been adjusted to support the timing of the MSF initiative. Legal staff is also preparing a revised lease with the MSF and a development agreement to guide future construction.

The Foundation desires to enhance its revenues, maintain lower user fees, and to expand opportunities for new soccer organizations and groups to play at SoccerPlex. Essentially, the MSF is asking for permission to schedule **NOW** the playing capacity that would be gained from three fields that are scheduled for construction in Phase II/III by relieving the requirement to rest the existing fields 25% of the time on league weekends. This will permit an additional 40 games each weekend or 90 teams to play in the spring and fall of 2006.

In summary, the net change to playing time in the pilot is:

Per Day	Current Phase I Games	Phase II Games	Phase III Games	Net game increase above current level
League Play	65	75	85	20

The potential revenue to be realized per season is \$80,000 to support existing operations. If maximized, annual revenues could approximate \$160,000 if this pilot is approved. However, it is not a given that every game opportunity would be scheduled.

The 2005 Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan projects approximately 123 ballfields (all types) are needed in the county by 2020. Some 52 of these fields are projected for the Upcounty area.

**Traffic Mitigation and Community Impact**

At the time South Germantown was developed, the most significant concern raised by some residents was the potential impact of traffic to be generated by use of the SoccerPlex and its effect on the quality of life for the surrounding community. This uncertainty was addressed in the lease by limiting the use of the fields to 75% of their playing capacity. In general, traffic at South Germantown Park has not generated any adverse impacts on the community. There are probably occasional complaints, but there have been no lingering disadvantages of placing this facility in this region.

The Commission's Transportation Staff completed two traffic studies for South Germantown Regional Park; one in 1998, prior to the Park opening, and again in 2002 in anticipation of Phase II development of three additional soccer fields and the indoor swimming pool. The traffic studies were shared previously with the Planning Board and County Council. I have extracted the critical findings from each study for your recall.

The 1998 Traffic Analysis Findings were two fold:

- 1. It is projected that full development of the park facilities including the SoccerPlex would generate a maximum of 8,000 vehicles per day on adjacent roadways on a typical soccer league weekend, and a maximum 1,900 vehicles per hour on adjacent roadways on a soccer tournament weekend.*
- 2. The traffic analysis indicates that traffic can be handled safely and adequately on the adjacent roadways (i.e. existing traffic plus the projected traffic from the area's approved subdivision plus the proposed South Germantown Recreational Park) with implementation of the anticipated roadway improvements in the vicinity of the park.*

Recommended road improvements were implemented in concert with the Park's development.

The 2002 Traffic Study for South Germantown Recreation Park – Phase II finding were:

- 1. The traffic surveys indicate that the daily and peak-hour traffic volumes that were collected on all roadways adjacent to the park are substantially less than each roadway's "desirable" daily or peak hour volume. This indicates that the projected traffic volume from area growth and the South Germantown Recreational Park Phase I development are being handled safely and adequately on the adjacent roadways.*
- 2. The traffic study for the South Germantown Recreational Park Phase II development includes traffic generated by the Aquatic Center in the background condition. The Aquatic Center is projected to generate a maximum of 1,775 vehicles per day on adjacent roads on a typical daily activity and a maximum of 300 vehicles per hour on adjacent roadways on a swim tournament weekend.*
- 3. It is projected that the Phase II development of the park, i.e. three additional soccer fields would generate a maximum of 870 vehicles per day on adjacent roadways on a typical soccer league weekend and a maximum of 160 vehicles per hour on adjacent roadways on a soccer tournament weekend.*
- 4. The traffic analysis for Phase II development indicates traffic can be handled safely and adequately on the adjacent roadways (i.e. existing traffic plus the projected traffic from area growth including the Aquatic Center plus the proposed South Germantown Recreational Park Phase II development) except the peak hour traffic hour condition on MD 118 north of Richter Farm Road. (Total Traffic Condition with Aquatic Center, Table 2) The peak-hour traffic volume on MD 118 under the total traffic condition with*

*the Aquatic Center exceeds the desirable maximum hourly volume for this roadway link. (Total Traffic Condition without Aquatic Center, Table 2) (Attached)*

To mitigate item four, Commission Transportation Staff recommends, *due to constraints on parking lot and roadway capacity, the SoccerPlex coordinate with the Aquatic Center to avoid scheduling weekend soccer and swim tournaments to be held on the same day or days.*

### **Summary**

Staff finds no adverse traffic impacts to adjacent communities that will result from approving additional games this spring at SoccerPlex. These games were anticipated in the build-out of fields at South Germantown Regional Park. The community, on the other hand, if not consulted and advised properly, may raise similar objections to additional play based on misconceptions as did occur in 1998. What is markedly different today, is the availability of actual operating experience of the SoccerPlex and the 2002 traffic analysis that indicates, that by avoiding special events scheduling on the same day, projected traffic levels in and around the park will not reach peak capacity even with development in the region.

Early communications with the surrounding Germantown Park neighbors and key Germantown organizations regarding proposed increase in games could and should abate community concerns. If the Planning Board approves this waiver, the MSF should be required to provide a communication plan that is based on accurate information and projected schedules, tournament days, and their commitment to coordinate with the Recreation Department. This is already occurring because the South Germantown Park Manager, Dean Turnball, has already instituted coordination meetings between SoccerPlex and the Recreation Department because the Aquatic Center opened in December. The community will have an opportunity to comment on the amended lease this spring at a public hearing. Following this hearing, the Commission could modify the "spring pilot" and make other adjustments it deems appropriate.

Finally, staff recommends an update of the 2002 traffic analysis and Traffic Management Plan to support the long-term lease amendment. This will give assurance to the community that the Planning Board will again consider not only the pilot game schedule, but also the compounded implications of traffic generated by all facilities at South Germantown Regional Park – the SoccerPlex, Aquatics Center, Fitness Center and other park features.

### **Attachment**

Letter: Letter from Maryland Soccer Foundation (12/7/2005)

Table 2: Traffic Study for South Germantown Recreational Park – Phase II

cc: Faroll Hamer, Acting Director  
William Mooney  
Gordon Rosenthal



Maryland Soccer Foundation

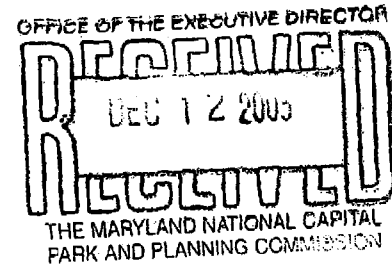
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December 7, 2005

Ms. Trudye Johnson  
Executive Director  
Maryland National-Capital Park  
And Planning Commission  
6611 Kenilworth Avenue, Suite 403  
Riverdale, Maryland 20737



Dear Trudye,

On behalf of the Maryland Soccer Foundation, I would like to request a waiver to extend our play opportunity capacity to include three of our four rested fields on the weekends during the spring and fall 2006 soccer seasons. This would enable the Foundation to increase revenue, maintain a lower field use fee structure, and expand the opportunity for new soccer organizations and groups to use the SoccerPlex.

The play opportunity capacity guidelines were established to allow the Foundation time to observe traffic impacts on the local community from weekend league play and to maintain the quality of the fields during the critical initial grow in period. We believe that this action will have a minimal impact on the local community, and the quality of fields will be maintained.

We are requesting the waiver at this time due to the travel soccer league imposed deadline of February 1 at which time the SoccerPlex must provide field assignments for local soccer club users.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Trish Heffelfinger  
Executive Director

CC: Bill Mooney  
Ken Salomon

**TABLE 2**

**SUMMARY OF ROADWAY (LINK) TRAFFIC VOLUME ANALYSIS**

	Desirable Maximum Volume		Existing Traffic		Background Traffic		Total Traffic w/Aquatic Center		Total Traffic w/o Aquatic Center	
	Daily	Hourly	Daily	Hourly	Daily	Hourly	Daily	Hourly	Daily	Hourly
1. MD 118 North of Richter Farm Road	18,000	1,800	11,460	1,560	12,740	1,800	13,265	1,905	12,200	1,725
2. Schaeffer Road MD 117-Richter Farm Road	9,000	900	3,865	525	4,035	560	4,105	575	3,965	550
3. Schaeffer Road Richter Farm Road-Park Entrance	24,000	2,400	10,475	1,450	11,930	1,725	12,525	1,850	11,325	1,645
4. Richter Farm Road Schaeffer Road - MD 118	31,000	3,100	8,160	1,295	8,360	1,350	8,840	1,450	7,865	1,285
5. White Ground Road	2,000	200	600	60	665	80	720	90	650	80
6. Burdette Lane/ Black Rock Road	2,000	200	400	40	465	55	490	60	440	50

TABLE II-Traffic Volume Analysis S.GTown Rec Park.doc

7/26/02