From:	David Minton
To:	Huang, Wen
Cc:	councilmember.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair
Subject:	Letter from David and Katherine Minton RE: Proposed Improvements to the Silver Spring Intermediate Park
Date:	Monday, July 23, 2018 1:40:40 PM

Dear Wen Huang, Members of the Montgomery County Planning Department, and County Council member Representatives:

Like our fellow neighbors adjacent to the **Silver Spring Intermediate Park**, my wife and I are writing with regard to the proposed Plans for this Park. Our family has been involved with the County's Park Planning process at every opportunity reserved for community input... and beyond. My wife attended the first Community Planning Meeting for initial input, and I attended the Second Community Planning Meeting when the four Options for Improvements to the Park were outlined. We responded to the On Line Survey regarding these four Options. In addition, I have contacted Ms. Huang twice by telephone to give my views of both the process the Park's department has chosen for community input as well as the substance of the Park Options.

In all of our communications we have made one point distinctly clear – shared by my neighbors fronting the Park - that is: keep the improvements *minimal* thus allowing the Park to function simply and organically as it has done SO WELL for so many years. Cluttering the Park with concrete and permanent structures viewed from a distance may seem like a "best practices" way of keeping this park current - but this is very generalized thinking. This Park has its own personality, natural green areas, and best functions which are obvious to those of us who see and use the Park every single day. "More" is not best. The Park is not broken; going to extreme lengths to "fix" it will only serve to erode or destroy its essential character.

While we support the proposed ADA and drainage improvements which are clearly necessary for practical and legal reasons, we do NOT support, and further will vigorously oppose, Options 3 and 4 or any elements of Options 3 or 4 which transform the Park into a more or less permanent soccer field. This is a small neighborhood part which was NEVER intended to accommodate the crowds which would attend regular soccer matches or heavy usage which overflow the already small Park parking lot. Currently, Boston Avenue bottlenecks on weekends when the green area of the park is used for temporary soccer practices – residents have great difficulty using their own parking and even navigating what turns into a one-way street. The impact of encouraging MORE soccer and OUTSIDE use in the small SSIP would have a decidedly negative impact on our immediate neighborhood.

Further, there was a clear MAJORITY of respondents who favored the combined Minimal approach (Options 1 & 2) as opposed to the Aggressive approach (Option 4). Option #4 is inconsistent with the weight of opinion at BOTH community meetings, when community members supported necessary modifications to address drainage issues and ADA compliance, but strongly favored minimal changes that do not change the character of the park.

As our neighbors Heidi and Roger Coleman have pointed out, the previous survey asked respondents whether they lived near the park and how often they use the park. Such questions were omitted from this latest survey. SSIP is very small and has always been intended as a local, neighborhood park. People who don't use the park and don't live nearby should not decide the outcome of its future.

My neighbors and I request another community meeting to hear the proposed decision BEFORE it is adopted, with another opportunity for community input.

- We request assurances that:

- The green spaces will be maintained and not divided

- Every effort will be made to keep as many trees as possible

- If any open green space is regraded or leveled, the two hills (the one between Philadelphia Avenue and the tennis courts; and the other one, from the parking area toward the green space between the tennis court and the playground) be kept intact, so young children can continue to use these hills for sledding

- No use will be added to the tennis court that will dominate that space and the rest of the par.

We look forward to your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,

David and Katherine Minton

705 Boston Avenue

Takoma Park, MD

Residents since 1997

cc: Hans Reimer, County Council At Large

Tom Hucker, County Council District 5

Montgomery Planning Board