

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Bryan M](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Thank you for your message
Date: Saturday, August 26, 2023 12:35:21 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,
My complete mailing address is:
Bryan McCann
8704 Maywood Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Testimony below:

Dear Planning Board,
I would like to register my support for the construction of the Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville, at Kansas Ave. The plans look fantastic. I am very impressed with the way planners have incorporated public suggestions!
This park will be a great addition to our neighborhood.

Thanks,
Bryan McCann
Rosemary Hills
8704 Maywood Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

On Sat, Aug 26, 2023 at 12:33 PM MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for this message. If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. You may provide this to MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

For all other e-mails, Chair's Office staff will respond as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please call our office at (301) 495-4605.

From: [Maira Hopkins](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for the New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, Sept. 7, Item 7
Date: Monday, August 28, 2023 6:19:14 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To whom it may concern.

Please take this email as a vote in support of the planned construction of the Neighborhood Park that will commemorate the Talbot Bridge, the bridge that gave segregated African Americans access to Georgia Ave, shopping, buses and taxis. The community of Lyttonsville is a significant cultural neighborhood because In 1853 Samuel Lytton, a freed person of color, purchased those four acres of land outside Silver Spring and provided a neighborhood where African Americans could purchase their own homes in a county and state that was segregated. It quickly became a community for free African Americans. However, without the bridge, built in 1918, residents of segregated Lyttonsville had no easy way to access services the white community took for granted. The bridge was an essential access point for residents of the unpaved community of Lyttonsville.

It is important to remember our history and never forget so I am pleased to support the funding and plans and request that the board approve the design and budget.
park

Sincerely,

A. Maira Hopkins

From: [Bill Hawkins](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for the New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, Sept. 7, Item 7
Date: Monday, August 28, 2023 5:32:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My name is William Hawkins and I live at 1912, Rookwood Rd, Silver Spring MD 20910.

I have lived in North Woodside for nearly 30 years. The more I learn how Montgomery County had treated the neighborhood of Lyttonsville in the past the more important it is to recognize the past injustices, prejudice and racial inequalities going forward.

I whole support the development of the Lyttonsville neighborhood park and the incorporation of the old bridge supports that were taken from train roundabout turn table. The bridge is important in telling the story of the isolation of Lyttonsville and the bridge being the access to resources outside the neighborhood. The Lyttonsville community and North Woodside would share the new park but the location on the future National Capitol Creasant Trail will make it accessible to all bikers and walkers on the trail.

Please approve the parks plan and fund the construction of the Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park as soon as possible.

Thank you.

From: [Matt Logan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Lyttonsville park written comments
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 12:43:02 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Lyttonsville park LOS 230830.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please include the attached comments with the package for discussion of the future neighborhood park in Lyttonsville for the September 7, 2023 meeting.

Many thanks,

Matt

Matthew Logan
Executive Director





August 30, 2023

Mr. Artie Harris, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Submitted via email to mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Dear Mr. Harris,

On behalf of Montgomery History, I am writing in support of the design and budget of the future neighborhood park, as presented in the Recommended Facility Plan presented in the memo to the Montgomery County Planning Board dated August 24, 2023.

While the proposed design provides numerous elements which we believe will enhance the park as a community gathering place, we are particularly pleased by the plans for the Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial. From its erection in 1918, the bridge served as a physical and symbolic dividing line between Black and White communities which were segregated by law and by practice. We believe it is fitting that the memorial, as a central component of the design, will ensure that the story of racial segregation and Jim Crow will never be forgotten, and the bridge can enjoy a second life as a source of unity, understanding, and community pride.

Montgomery History—the county’s historical society—has been serving residents and the region through its research library, adult programs, educational activities, publications, exhibits, and conferences since the organization was founded in 1944. As the only organization addressing the entire scope of county history, we serve a unique role in creating a shared sense of place and building safer and more welcoming communities.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the future park design. Please contact me at 301-512-7027 or MLogan@MontgomeryHistory.org if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Logan".

Matthew Logan
Executive Director

From: [Jay Mallin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Subject: Link for "The Bridge" Video and Testimony for the New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park
Date: Thursday, August 31, 2023 11:18:46 AM
Attachments: [Screenshot 2023-08-31 at 11.14.19 AM.png](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Montgomery Planning Board,

I'm writing to enthusiastically endorse the plan for a Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park that is scheduled to be presented at your Sept. 7 meeting. Although all of the Park staff's design looks excellent to me, I'd like to focus particularly on the inclusion of elements from the Talbot Avenue Bridge — and to offer a link to a short video that provides some understanding of the importance of the Bridge.

I'm a photographer and filmmaker, a two-time recipient of grants from the county's Arts & Humanities Commission, and I live a few blocks from Lyttonsville. When I moved here about a dozen years ago I knew nothing about the history of the Talbot Avenue Bridge or historic Lyttonsville. After I came to learn the significance of each, however, I produced a mini documentary on the subject, "[The Bridge.](#)"

You can see this short, 16-minute documentary online at <https://vimeo.com/232023048>. The reception of the video demonstrates the Bridge's significance to the larger Montgomery County community. To date this documentary has been viewed more than 2,700 times, and people are still watching it.

Briefly, the documentary tells the story of Lyttonsville, a Montgomery County Black community founded in 1858, largely through interviews with two people whose families are multi-generational residents of Lyttonsville and with a historian who played a central role in researching and publicizing the neighborhood's history.

The Talbot Avenue Bridge speaks to our county's past, present and hoped-for future. Historically, Lyttonsville was one of an estimated 40+ Black hamlets scattered through the county. In these hamlets generations of Black Montgomery County citizens found homes and supportive communities where they could prosper and raise families, insulated at least in part from the many forms of discrimination used to keep Black residents out of our county. The Talbot Avenue Bridge itself is a central link to the story of how the residents of one of these communities, Lyttonsville/Linden, accessed jobs and shopping during the day and returned home from districts where they could work or spend money but were not welcome to buy homes.

The story continues in the present day. About a year after the documentary was released amidst a growing awareness of this history, the residents on the other side of the Bridge — who had repeatedly tried to close it — officially apologized for the historic racism in their community. This happened publicly at a joint commemoration of the Bridge's 100th anniversary, a celebration of reconciliation that was remarkable to see.

Going forward, the three communities closest to the Bridge — Lyttonsville, their historically White neighbors across the Bridge, and Rosemary Hills, founded as a neighborhood where Jewish homeowners would be welcome — now meet annually to hold a candle-lit Bridge Walk to remember and celebrate their joint history, and to work together toward a joint future.

For me, this is the significance of the park and its inclusion of the two cast-iron girders. The park would be lovely and useful in many ways, and my wife and I would look forward to enjoying it regularly. But in its commemoration of the Talbot Avenue Bridge, the park will be able to tell a story with a significance that reaches far beyond our neighborhood.

Thank you,

Jay Mallin
2000 Spencer Road

jay@jaymallinphotos.com

(202) 997-4433



<https://vimeo.com/232023048>

mobile: +1.202.997.4433

photography: jaymallinphotos.com

film & video: video.jaymallinphotos.com



From: [Alan Bowser](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Roger Paden](#); [Valarie Barr@hotmail.com](mailto:Valarie_Barr@hotmail.com); [Patricia Tyson](#); [Charlotte Coffield](#); [Alan Bowser](#); [Clark Larson](#)
Subject: Support - Park Facility Plan - Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville (Silver Spring)
Date: Friday, September 1, 2023 11:35:11 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

I am writing in strong support of the Park Facility Plan - Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville (Silver Spring) developed by the Montgomery County Department of Parks and want to thank all of the Parks staff who have worked on the Plan.

I have been involved in community development in the Lyttonsville neighborhood for many years, and I'm pleased to see that the Department has given this project the attention that was so sorely needed. During our community work on the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan and the planning and the ceremony marking the removal of the Talbot Avenue Bridge, there was always great community interest in how to ensure new and activated green space in the area and how to preserve elements of the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge.

As you know, there is great, important and proud history associated with the Lyttonsville community, and this Facility Plan goes a long way to preserving and memorializing the contributions of many great leaders from Lyttonsville. I'm pleased to see that Parks has continually reached out to the community to discuss the project and to obtain input from residents.

I am particularly excited about the Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial, as the Bridge played an extraordinarily historic role in the area's development.

Congratulations to all who have been involved in the development of this Plan.

I trust that you will keep the Lyttonsville community involved in the next steps.

Alan Bowser

President, Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.

Member, Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee

From: [Joel Teitelbaum](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Anna White](#); [Patricia Tyson](#)
Subject: My Written Testimony, Item 7, for Future Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park. Joel Teitelbaum
Date: Sunday, September 3, 2023 12:18:18 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chairman, M-NCPPC Planning Board
September 3, 2023

I Testify in Strong Favor of final draft design/content prepared by Montgomery Parks Planners of the innovative, history-preserving “Future Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park”. As a member of the Historic Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee and a local community resident, I have followed the entire ‘Planning Process’ for this new Park and observed the remarkable interactive and collaborative way in which the Lead Planner, Ching-Fang, and her Supervisor fulfilled a meaningful historical Vision of Lyttonsville residents in designing this functional, interpretive Montgomery County Park.

I urge M-NCPPC Planning Board to APPROVE Parks’ draft Plan and appreciate its special race-relations educational history content. The future Lyttonsville Neighborhood Local Park will be built on previously dormant Montgomery County-owned land, featuring a curated REPLICA of Century-old ‘historic’ Talbot Avenue Bridge formerly adjacent to the new Park. This unusual early 20th Century railway overpass bridge was recently written up and recognized as architecturally and socially historic by the Library of Congress. ‘The Bridge’, as affectionately known to local community members, played an important human and socio-economic transportation function connecting the historically Black, formerly segregated Lyttonsville residential and working community to surrounding Silver Spring in Montgomery County. It providing public walking and vehicular access across the long-gone B & O Railway (now the CSX Railway Corridor) for generations of Lyttonsvillers to access greater Silver Spring and Montgomery County. With long-awaited, and still under-construction for past 7 years, Purple Line Light Rail commuter train system, the new Lyttonsville Park will directly overlook both the existing CSX rail corridor used by AMTRAK continental-linking Trains from Washington, D.C., and the State of Maryland’s MARC intercity in-state Commuter Rail linking Silver Spring and Washington, D.C. all the way to Western Maryland.

From: [Joel Teitelbaum](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: MCP-Chair: My Mailing Address for Sept 7, Item 7Written Testimony
Date: Sunday, September 3, 2023 12:47:55 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

ATTENTION: MCP-CHAIR: September 3, 2023

As requested below, here is my complete home Mailing Address for Written Testimony I submitted On-Line today. I strongly support Montgomery Parks' Planning Department draft 'design/content' for the 'Future Lyttonsville Neighborhood Local Park'. My written Testimony is intended for the M-NCPPC Planning Board Hearing of September 7, 2023, Item 7, and linked Montgomery Parks Budget Hearing (specific to this new Park) also on September 7th, Item 6.

My Mailing address:

Joel Teitelbaum
2228 Richland Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910
[in the Greater Lyttonsville residential community]

E-mail Address: joelanthro2@gmail.com
Cell Phone: 240-722-5424

Thank You for accepting my Written Testimony for Sept 7, 2023

Joel Teitelbaum

On Sun, Sep 3, 2023 at 12:18 PM MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for this message. If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. You may provide this to MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

For all other e-mails, Chair's Office staff will respond as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please call our office at (301) 495-4605.

From: [abe schuchman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony in Favor of Constructing the Lyttonsville Neighborhood Green; Full Funding in FY25-30 CIP
Date: Sunday, September 3, 2023 4:24:16 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

I write to request your support for the design and full funding of the new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Green. Ching-Fang Chen from Montgomery Parks worked very hard on the design and genuinely sought input from the community. As a result, the new park will be a beautiful and peaceful oasis for community members as well as County residents who utilize the Crescent Trail. Equally importantly, the design memorializes the Talbot Avenue Bridge and will provide visitors to the park with the opportunity to learn about the Bridge, the history of Lyttonsville, and race relations in Montgomery County. I urge you to support all elements of the design of the new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Green. Moreover, I request that full funding for this new park be incorporated into the FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Abe Schuchman
Rock Creek Forest Resident

From: [ANNE SUMNER](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Montgomery Planning Board meeting September 7, 2023 Item 7: Park Facility Planning-Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville
Date: Monday, September 4, 2023 8:58:15 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman and Montgomery County Planning Board Members:

I wholeheartedly endorse the plan for the Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville developed by M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks Staff. For the sake of both present and future generations, I urge the Montgomery County Planning Board to say YES to the park design and then allocate the funding which will make the new park possible.

As a long time resident of Montgomery County who profoundly understands that a bright and equitable future depends on learning about our history from both a local and national perspective, I believe a way must be found to preserve the Talbot Avenue Bridge. Both the Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial and Heritage Terrace, played an extraordinarily important role in Lyttonsville history. For the residents of Lyttonsville, the Talbot Avenue Bridge provided for decades a critical transit route between their homes in Lyttonsville and the rest of Montgomery County which was often both unwelcoming and unsafe.

The design that County is now considering would preserve this vital history and memorialize the significant contributions made by leaders from Lyttonsville in the national and local struggle for equal rights. Ideally, the opening of this new park and the resulting publicity can also serve to promote the important work done by the planning staff in their "Briefing on the Mapping Segregation Project". This project documents the real estate covenants in Montgomery County which prevented both Black and Jewish Americans from buying houses in White neighborhoods. Hopefully, a reference to the map will be included in the interpretive signage on the Heritage Terrace along with information on the "Sundown Laws" which required each day that Blacks leave White areas by sundown. This signage will in essence be providing context for why and how the Bridge was an important and safe way home for Lyttonsville Black residents.

Please know that members of the community are eager to enthusiastically work with the Montgomery County Park staff. Developing the signage for the Heritage Terrace, will insure that important local history will become known to and memorialized for local residents, as well as to all who walk the Capital Crescent Trail and use the nearby Purple Line Station.

Please appreciate that the creation of this neighborhood park is consistent with the promises made in the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan which calls for the creation of a public space network.

In short, I sincerely and wholeheartedly ask the the Planning Board to approve the proposed design for this park and then provide the funding necessary to make it into an important reality for current and future generations of Montgomery County residents.

Very best regards,

Anne E. Sumner, MD
4821 Montgomery Lane
Unit 105
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

From: [Jenny Hess](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Anna White](#)
Subject: New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, Sept. 7, Item 7 (CIP Forum, Item 6) -- Jennifer Hess
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 8:29:02 AM

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September 5, 2023

Montgomery County
Planning Board
2425 Reddie Dr., 14th
Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Jennifer Hess
1910 Luzerne Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Montgomery County Planning Department:

I am a resident of North Woodside in Silver Spring and am writing to express my support for the proposed design of the Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park. I encourage the Planning Board to fully fund the park in the 2025-30 CIP Budget. I particularly like the inclusion of the former Talbot Bridge in the design. The bridge memorial will be used to educate the public of the importance the bridge played in the history of the two bordering neighborhoods of Lyttonsville and North Woodside.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Hess

From: [Roger K Paden](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony Items 6 and 7, Sept 7 session
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 9:52:35 AM

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TO: THE CHAIR AND THE MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING BOARD
FROM: ROGER PADEN
RE: AGENDA ITEM 6 AND 7, SEPTEMBER 7

Although I strongly support the New Lyttonsville Park and encourage you to approve the design and fully fund the proposal, I would like to raise two minor quibbles with the design.

(1) I think that the skate spot is out of place. Not only will the spot introduce additional sporadic noise into the park, but I think that, if it attracts users there may be conflicts between spot users and trail users, who will be moving at different speeds. I urge you to save some money and eliminate the skate spot.

(2) There is a telephone pole adjacent to the memorial. This is unfortunate. It would be good if it could be moved so as to avoid this jarring juxtaposition. Money saved on the skate spot could be used to move the pole.

Roger Paden
2209 Richland PL
Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: eks1958@rcn.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: WRITTEN TESTIMONY: Testimony for the New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, September 7, 2023; Item #7
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 10:37:45 AM
Attachments: [M-NCPPC New Lyttonsville Park Testimony 090723 Item 7 Santorini Illustrated.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chairman of the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Planning Board,

I am including the text portion of my written testimony in favor of the New Lyttonsville Park into the body of this email and attaching the identical text - plus illustrated pages of the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee's events over the last few years - as a pdf attachment.

Thank you!

September 5, 2023

To the Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is Eva Santorini. My husband and I have lived in the Rosemary Hills section of Silver Spring, which lies 3 blocks to the southeast of Lyttonsville, since 1988. I would like to thank you and the members of the Montgomery County Planning Board for this opportunity to offer public comments on a project that is very near and very dear to my heart: the future Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park. I fully support the facility plan and full funding of the park.

It is very fitting for this small parcel of land to the community to be transferred to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) upon completion of the Purple Line as part of the Capital Crescent Trail greenway corridor. It is striking because Lyttonsville, like other Black communities, endured substandard support and infrastructure for many decades and suffered the threat of erasure, the silent treatment of being ignored and 'disappeared'.

I would have preferred to present my testimony in person, but my job does not allow for that and written testimony lets me delve into greater detail. First and foremost, I thank you for the opportunity to offer my thoughts in this hearing, and I plan to attend this evening's CIP testimony.

Raised Awareness

In the summer of 2018 I attended a Living History "pop-up museum" event on the Talbot Avenue Bridge out of curiosity. The speaker, historian David Rosenstein, had posted plaques detailing the Bridge's history. He also spoke passionately about the history of Lyttonsville and described how the Bridge had been a lifeline for that community's residents to transportation, jobs, and other parts of the Washington DC area during a time when opportunities for African-Americans were exceedingly limited. He detailed what residents had endured: streets remained unpaved long after newer developments' roads had been paved. Water hook-ups did not exist until the 1970s. Nearby industrial zoning, unceremoniously "dumped" near the

community without its residents' input, subjected the residents to pollution and noise from bus and railroad depots.

But residents had endured something far more sinister. It was during that history lesson and subsequent conversations that I learned the meaning of the expressions “sundown community” and “erasure” – and that these were not abstractions occurring elsewhere, but a stark reality for a community only blocks from where I live. The devastating effects of racially restrictive covenant deeds in North Woodside remained in place for decades. In the 1990s, demonstrations for and against closing the Bridge and its effects on pedestrian and traffic safety pitted many residents of Lyttonsville and North Woodside, the communities on either side of the Bridge, against each other.

A brighter side to learning of the communities' stark differences came in the form of storytelling by Lyttonsville elders, Patricia Tyson and Charlotte Coffield. Ms. Tyson shared vivid memories of her youth and how residents of Lyttonsville listened for the “voice” of the Bridge. (Even in later years, one would hear the creaking of the Bridge when crossing it.) Ms. Coffield told stories of her experience of growing up in Lyttonsville and how fortunate and loved she felt as part of that small but closely-knit community. She also reminded us for how long the neighborhood lagged behind in usual modern amenities.

I promised myself to learn more about this neglected bit of local history and to keep the history of Lyttonsville and the Bridge and its significance to the original African-American community alive. A group of neighbors from Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills, who were equally passionate about unearthing the stories of Lyttonsville and what was simply, but lovingly, called “The Bridge” joined forces with a dedicated purpose: to highlight the history of both, to celebrate the Bridge's significance, and to throw the Bridge a 100th birthday party. We called ourselves the Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee.

Planning a Birthday Party...for a Bridge

The Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee's first goal came with some urgency. The Bridge had been erected in 1918 using a repurposed train turnstile and was in such state of disrepair and neglect that transportation officials closed it to vehicular traffic and even limited the number of pedestrians. It was scheduled to be taken down in preparation of construction for the Purple Line. Our group didn't have much time to organize a centennial birthday party and we got right to work.

The Committee met several times and divided jobs. As a graphic artist I developed a logo for our PR campaign, as well as an illustrated program for the event. Others volunteered to take on the multitude of necessary jobs and we planned a timeline and organized the event for the fall. Preparations moved forward and with ever-greater grassroots support, we welcomed visitors to the Bridge's Birthday Party on Saturday, September 22, 2018.

We were heartened to see so many guests. Elected local officials and some Committee members spoke about the significance of the Bridge and its celebration. Musical performances followed, as well as an Art Exhibit organized by many young local artists.

Two noteworthy moments occurred during the celebration. David Cox, then-President of the North Woodside Neighborhood Association, read a proclamation denouncing the decades-long racially restrictive covenant deeds that had been on the books and offered an emotional

apology. Equally moving was the realization, which can be attributed to Ms. Tyson, was that the Bridge that had once DIVIDED neighborhoods was now UNITING them.

The Committee's Work Continues

After the centennial birthday celebration, our Committee decided to continue to pursue its goals of educating others about Lyttonsville and the Talbot Avenue Bridge. In November 2018 we held the First Annual Lantern Walk and a Spring Party followed in May 2019. In June 2019 the Committee organized a vigil for the Bridge. We recognized that it would be the final event on the beloved structure. Candles were lit and an African-themed table was set up in the center of the Bridge. Those in attendance sang songs and shared memories. Once again, the Bridge was uniting people. Many offered their services for this touching final event: professional videographers recorded the evening and singers from Jubilee Voices led us in song.

Plans for a fall presentation about the Bridge were put into place at the University of Maryland's School of Architecture under the guidance of Professor Jeremy Wells. Committee members from Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills spoke at the presentation on October 30, 2019.

The Bridge Comes Down

Construction on the Purple Line had continued in fits and starts, but workers finally began deconstruction of the Talbot Avenue Bridge in July 2019. Department of Transportation and Purple Line officials agreed to store parts of the Bridge, especially its girders for use in a future park and for public art planned for the Purple Line Lyttonsville Park station. Charlotte Coffield from Lyttonsville, Anna White of North Woodside, and neighbors witnessed and documented the Bridge being disassembled and to pay their respect. With that, a piece of local history was gone.

Keeping the Story Alive

Efforts to keep the story of Lyttonsville and the Bridge alive continue while construction continues on the new Talbot Avenue Bridge and the Purple Line. Many people are involved in these efforts, but not many are as engaged than North Woodside resident Anna White. Her passionate activism involves the continuation of the Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk. Now in its sixth year, families and individuals walk from North Woodside, wind through the streets of Lyttonsville, and finish the walk in Rosemary Hills. The walkers sing "This Little Light of Mine" as the brisk night is brightened by the soft glow of lit lanterns. In some years we stop at the houses of older residents who can no longer join the walks and greet them. Local elected officials are invited to join the Walk, and musicians and speakers come to the reception that follows. This simple, but fun, family-friendly activity keeps the spirit of the Bridge alive.

Sharing the history of Lyttonsville also continues through efforts to create a Lyttonsville Museum. Growing out of the large annual display of historic photographs from Lyttonsville that Ms. Tyson and Ms. Coffield exhibit at the Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center during Black History Month, a committee has been formed to formally identify and document archived materials and develop a network of organizations and individuals to help with the founding of the Lyttonsville Museum. The Coffield Community Center, located only 0.4 miles from the future Lyttonsville Park, could be seen as a suitable location for such a Museum.

Building a Place of Respite

Fast forward to this moment – this hearing on finalizing the future Lyttonsville Park located on a small plot of land IN Lyttonsville and ABOUT Lyttonsville.

Extraordinarily constructive and collaborative dialogues between Montgomery County Park designer Ching-Fang Chen and her team and residents from Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills, have culminated in a beautiful design for this neighborhood park. Those of us who have been involved in these discussions are very pleased to see that this carefully-planned park will honor Lyttonsville, include girders of the historic Bridge, and offer respite under a green canopy of trees to those who visit and those who pass the park on the Capital Crescent Trail. Plaques or informational signage will let visitors learn of the rich history that sprang up around this small but precious plot of land.

Last but not at all least, we look forward to celebrating future Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walks in this wonderful new space at the point where our three neighborhoods meet. I am so very excited!

I am very grateful to so many who have been involved in our collective efforts: David Rotenstein who piqued my interest in the largely-ignored local history; long-time residents of Lyttonsville and Rosemary Hills who have shared their memories and stories; videographer and neighbor Jay Mallin who documents their storytelling; artists and musicians who have given of their time to add color and texture to TAB Committee events; and the members of the Talbot Avenue Committee who continue to ensure that the rich history of Lyttonsville is not erased or forgotten.

The story of Samuel Lytton will be told in this park and the story of this community will endure.

Thank you.

Eva Santorini
8714 Sundale Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Member, Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee
Member, Lyttonsville Museum Committee
Treasurer, Rosemary Hills Neighborhood Association

September 5, 2023

To the Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board

My name is Eva Santorini. My husband and I have lived in the Rosemary Hills section of Silver Spring, which lies 3 blocks to the southeast of Lyttonsville, since 1988. I would like to thank you and the members of the Montgomery County Planning Board for this opportunity to offer public comments on a project that is very near and very dear to my heart: the future Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park. I fully support the facility plan and full funding of the park.

It is very fitting for this small parcel of land to the community to be transferred to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) upon completion of the Purple Line as part of the Capital Crescent Trail greenway corridor. It is striking because Lyttonsville, like other Black communities, endured substandard support and infrastructure for many decades and suffered the threat of erasure, the silent treatment of being ignored and ‘disappeared’.

I would have preferred to present my testimony in person, but my job does not allow for that and written testimony lets me delve into greater detail. First and foremost, I thank you for the opportunity to offer my thoughts in this hearing, and I plan to attend this evening’s CIP testimony.

Raised Awareness

In the summer of 2018 I attended a Living History “pop-up museum” event on the Talbot Avenue Bridge out of curiosity. The speaker, historian David Rosenstein, had posted plaques detailing the Bridge’s history. He also spoke passionately about the history of Lyttonsville and described how the Bridge had been a lifeline for that community’s residents to transportation, jobs, and other parts of the Washington DC area during a time when opportunities for African-Americans were exceedingly limited. He detailed what residents had endured: streets remained unpaved long after newer developments’ roads had been paved. Water hook-ups did not exist until the 1970s. Nearby industrial zoning, unceremoniously “dumped” near the community without its residents’ input, subjected the residents to pollution and noise from bus and railroad depots.

But residents had endured something far more sinister. It was during that history lesson and subsequent conversations that I learned the meaning of the expressions “sundown community” and “erasure” – and that these were not abstractions occurring elsewhere, but a stark reality for a community only blocks from where I live. The devastating effects of racially restrictive covenant deeds in North Woodside remained in place for decades. In the 1990s,

demonstrations for and against closing the Bridge and its effects on pedestrian and traffic safety pitted many residents of Lyttonsville and North Woodside, the communities on either side of the Bridge, against each other.

A brighter side to learning of the communities' stark differences came in the form of storytelling by Lyttonsville elders, Patricia Tyson and Charlotte Coffield. Ms. Tyson shared vivid memories of her youth and how residents of Lyttonsville listened for the "voice" of the Bridge. (Even in later years, one would hear the creaking of the Bridge when crossing it.) Ms. Coffield told stories of her experience of growing up in Lyttonsville and how fortunate and loved she felt as part of that small but closely-knit community. She also reminded us for how long the neighborhood lagged behind in usual modern amenities.

I promised myself to learn more about this neglected bit of local history and to keep the history of Lyttonsville and the Bridge and its significance to the original African-American community alive. A group of neighbors from Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills, who were equally passionate about unearthing the stories of Lyttonsville and what was simply, but lovingly, called "The Bridge" joined forces with a dedicated purpose: to highlight the history of both, to celebrate the Bridge's significance, and to throw the Bridge a 100th birthday party. We called ourselves the Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee.

Planning a Birthday Party...for a Bridge

The Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee's first goal came with some urgency. The Bridge had been erected in 1918 using a repurposed train turnstile and was in such state of disrepair and neglect that transportation officials closed it to vehicular traffic and even limited the number of pedestrians. It was scheduled to be taken down in preparation of construction for the Purple Line. Our group didn't have much time to organize a centennial birthday party and we got right to work.

The Committee met several times and divided jobs. As a graphic artist I developed a logo for our PR campaign, as well as an illustrated program for the event. Others volunteered to take on the multitude of necessary jobs and we planned a timeline and organized the event for the fall. Preparations moved forward and with ever-greater grassroots support, we welcomed visitors to the Bridge's Birthday Party on Saturday, September 22, 2018.

We were heartened to see so many guests. Elected local officials and some Committee members spoke about the significance of the Bridge and its celebration. Musical performances followed, as well as an Art Exhibit organized by many young local artists.

Two noteworthy moments occurred during the celebration. David Cox, then-President of the North Woodside Neighborhood Association, read a proclamation denouncing the decades-long racially restrictive covenant deeds that had been on the books and offered an emotional apology. Equally moving was the realization, which can be attributed to Ms. Tyson, was that the Bridge that had once DIVIDED neighborhoods was now UNITING them.

The Committee's Work Continues

After the centennial birthday celebration, our Committee decided to continue to pursue its goals of educating others about Lyttonsville and the Talbot Avenue Bridge. In November 2018 we held the First Annual Lantern Walk and a Spring Party followed in May 2019. In June 2019 the Committee organized a vigil for the Bridge. We recognized that it would be the final event on the beloved structure. Candles were lit and an African-themed table was set up in the center of the Bridge. Those in attendance sang songs and shared memories. Once again, the Bridge was uniting people. Many offered their services for this touching final event: professional videographers recorded the evening and singers from Jubilee Voices led us in song.

Plans for a fall presentation about the Bridge were put into place at the University of Maryland's School of Architecture under the guidance of Professor Jeremy Wells. Committee members from Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills spoke at the presentation on October 30, 2019.

The Bridge Comes Down

Construction on the Purple Line had continued in fits and starts, but workers finally began deconstruction of the Talbot Avenue Bridge in July 2019. Department of Transportation and Purple Line officials agreed to store parts of the Bridge, especially its girders for use in a future park and for public art planned for the Purple Line Lyttonsville Park station. Charlotte Coffield from Lyttonsville, Anna White of North Woodside, and neighbors witnessed and documented the Bridge being disassembled and to pay their respect. With that, a piece of local history was gone.

Keeping the Story Alive

Efforts to keep the story of Lyttonsville and the Bridge alive continue while construction continues on the new Talbot Avenue Bridge and the Purple Line. Many people are involved in these efforts, but not many are as engaged than North Woodside resident Anna White. Her passionate activism involves the continuation of the Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk. Now in its sixth year, families and individuals walk from North Woodside, wind through the streets of Lyttonsville, and finish the walk in Rosemary Hills. The walkers sing "This Little Light of Mine" as

the brisk night is brightened by the soft glow of lit lanterns. In some years we stop at the houses of older residents who can no longer join the walks and greet them. Local elected officials are invited to join the Walk, and musicians and speakers come to the reception that follows. This simple, but fun, family-friendly activity keeps the spirit of the Bridge alive.

Sharing the history of Lyttonsville also continues through efforts to create a Lyttonsville Museum. Growing out of the large annual display of historic photographs from Lyttonsville that Ms. Tyson and Ms. Coffield exhibit at the Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center during Black History Month, a committee has been formed to formally identify and document archived materials and develop a network of organizations and individuals to help with the founding of the Lyttonsville Museum. The Coffield Community Center, located only 0.4 miles from the future Lyttonsville Park, could be seen as a suitable location for such a Museum.

Building a Place of Respite

Fast forward to this moment – this hearing on finalizing the future Lyttonsville Park located on a small plot of land IN Lyttonsville and ABOUT Lyttonsville.

Extraordinarily constructive and collaborative dialogues between Montgomery County Park designer Ching-Fang Chen and her team and residents from Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills, have culminated in a beautiful design for this neighborhood park. Those of us who have been involved in these discussions are very pleased to see that this carefully-planned park will honor Lyttonsville, include girders of the historic Bridge, and offer respite under a green canopy of trees to those who visit and those who pass the park on the Capital Crescent Trail. Plaques or informational signage will let visitors learn of the rich history that sprang up around this small but precious plot of land.

Last but not at all least, we look forward to celebrating future Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walks in this wonderful new space at the point where our three neighborhoods meet. I am so very excited!

I am very grateful to so many who have been involved in our collective efforts: David Rotenstein who piqued my interest in the largely-ignored local history; long-time residents of Lyttonsville and Rosemary Hills who have shared their memories and stories; videographer and neighbor Jay Mallin who documents their storytelling; artists and musicians who have given of their time to add color and texture to TAB Committee events; and the members of the Talbot Avenue Committee who continue to ensure that the rich history of Lyttonsville is not erased or forgotten.

The story of Samuel Lytton will be told in this park and the story of this community will endure.

Thank you.

Eva Santorini

8714 Sundale Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Member, Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee

Member, Lyttonsville Museum Committee

Treasurer, Rosemary Hills Neighborhood Association



2018 Talbot Avenue Bridge 100th Birthday Party!



2019 Talbot Avenue Bridge Events



2019 Talbot Avenue Bridge Event: Architecture Class at UMD



Talbot Avenue Bridge Events & Black History Month Exhibit at Coffield Center



From: [Webb Smedley](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Chen, Ching-Fang](#); [Beli Acharya](#); [Susan Drumheller](#); [Kerry Korpi and Nathan Seppa](#); [Ellen Galantucci](#)
Subject: Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 12:44:06 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I am writing to request that the Planning Board approve the facility plan for this important restoration and park project at its September 7, 2023 meeting.

This small park will be an important green space along the Purple Line and Capital Crescent Trail corridor. After the loss of so many trees for the construction of this major infrastructure project, it is important that the park be designed to allow the unencumbered growth of major native tree species as well as native pollinator plants. Please avoid overuse of any one species or non-native plants.

Inclusion of historic structural elements from the Talbot Street bridge is a great idea and the design team has developed some good concepts for this. A section of bridge parallel to the Capital Crescent Trail can allow pedestrians to deviate into the park briefly to learn some of the history of our communities and not disrupt the flow of activities within the park.

We hope the Planning Board will move this project forward through design and permitting expeditiously with a goal of initiating construction as soon as the land has been transferred to MNCPPC after completion of the Purple Line. With this in mind, please propose appropriate funding in upcoming annual budgets.

Sincerely,

,
Webb L. Smedley
Co-Chair, **Green Committee**
Woodside Civic Association

8704 Second Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910
cell: 301/651-8890

From: [Valarie Barr](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Montgomery Planning Board meeting September 7, 2023
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 3:09:20 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Testimony for Montgomery Planning Board meeting September 7, 2023
Item 7: Park Facility Planning-Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville

To the Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

I am writing to enthusiastically support the plan for the Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville developed by M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks Staff. I urge the Planning Board to approve the park design and to allocate funding to create this new park.

I am part of the community that has been watching for many years while hoping that a way could be found to preserve at least some parts of the Talbot Avenue Bridge and with it the important local history contained in the bridge. I am particularly excited about the Talbot Avenue Bridge Memorial and Heritage Terrace, as the Bridge played an extraordinary role in Lyttonsville history. For many years, the Talbot Avenue Bridge provided a connection for the residents of Lyttonsville from the “safe space” in their neighborhood to the larger, outside world of Montgomery County that was not generally safe or welcoming. The current design could help preserve this history and memorialize the contributions of many great leaders from Lyttonsville in the struggle for equal rights. Ideally, the opening of this new park and the resulting publicity can also serve to promote the important work done by the planning staff in their “Briefing on the Mapping Segregation Project” that documents the racial real estate covenants in Montgomery County that prevented Blacks and Jews from buying houses in White neighborhoods. Hopefully, a reference to the map will be included in the interpretive signage on the Heritage Terrace along with information on the “Sundown Laws” that required Blacks to leave White areas by sundown each day, thus underlining the importance of the Bridge as a way home for Black Lyttonsville residents. Many community members are looking forward to continuing to work with the Parks staff as they develop the signage for the Heritage Terrace, which will insure that important local history will be accessible not just to local residents, but also to those who stop by from the Capital Crescent Trail and the nearby Purple Line Station.

The creation of this neighborhood park is also consistent with the promises made in the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan which calls for the creation of a public space network. I hope the Planning Board will approve the wonderful design for this local park and will recommend the funding needed to translate it into reality.

Certainly, kudos for everyone who worked on the plan for the Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville!

Sincerely,
Valarie Barr
2209 Richland Place
Silver Spring MD 20910

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
P.O. Box 30703
Bethesda, MD 20824
www.cctrail.org

September 6, 2023

Mr. Artie Harris
Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive
14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Proposed Construction of New Montgomery County Lyttonsville Park

Dear Mr. Harris,

The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail enthusiastically supports the facility plan for the construction of the proposed new neighborhood park in Lyttonsville. Our overall support for the project must be balanced, however, with one substantive safety concern described in more detail below regarding the placement of the “skate spot” directly adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail. We are concerned that it could result in an unsafe and hazardous situation for pedestrians and bikers on the trail, as well as for skaters.

We are a local, non-profit community-based group, managed by volunteers, and supported by several thousand members. We were founded over 35 years ago with the aim of persuading authorities in the District of Columbia and Maryland to acquire the abandoned rail line and construct a paved multiuse trail from Georgetown to Silver Spring. A paved section of the Capital Crescent Trail will finally be extended from Bethesda to downtown Silver Spring as part of Purple Line light rail construction, running alongside this proposed new Lyttonsville Park.

The current trail is one of the most popular and well-used trails in the country and it has the highest volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic of any paved trail in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Upwards of a million people use the trail annually for recreation and commuting between Georgetown, DC and locations in Montgomery County, with easy access to Arlington, Virginia.

The 2017 Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan recognizes that the community would benefit from the trail’s extension and calls for “trails and open spaces that could be expanded with new greenways and civic greens to benefit more residents”, which promotes and encourages physical activity.

The design of the park will provide more green space for the neighborhood and welcomed rest stop for trail users, including proposed water and bicycle repair stations. The focus on installing native pollinator gardens and other appropriate plant species aligns with the Coalition's "Free the Trees" and other related environmental sustainability efforts. We also appreciate the attention Montgomery County Parks is making towards ensuring the historical aspects of the neighborhood are recognized by incorporating infrastructure from the previous Talbot Avenue Bridge into new significant cultural amenities.

These amenities are very promising and beneficial to the local neighborhood and overall trail users. That said, we are very concerned about the proposed "skate spot" feature due to relevant safety issues. Skateboarding areas normally have a safe buffer zone between the skateboarders and surrounding activities. There is a landscaped buffer between the skate spot and the rest of the park. However, there is no buffer between the skate spot and traffic on the trail. As planned, the skateboarding area has a very small footprint with unobstructed access to the trail. Skateboarders need space to build up speed in order to accelerate onto the skate ramp; they need sufficient space to land after they travel off the ramp. Consequently, skateboarders will have to use trail space to engage in their sport., because there does not appear to be enough space in the park itself. This is likely to create friction and disputes between trail users and skateboarders, as well as lead to collisions between skateboarders and the pedestrians and bikers on the trail. We appreciate the community's interest in the proposed skateboarding amenity and think that skateboarders should have a place to enjoy the sport. However, we don't think that the current location or configuration is safe or appropriate. We believe that closer attention is needed on this particular feature to continue ensuring the safety of all users on the Capital Crescent Trail. We are willing to discuss the skate spot feature further with appropriate staff and community members to ensure these potential safety concerns are addressed at this early stage in the process.

Finally, the Coalition is willing to also fund, install, and manage a display case providing information about the trail, wayfinding, events, and local historical insights. This case would be similar to what we have installed along the trail at Weiner Plaza and the Dalecarlia Reservoir south of Bethesda. We are happy to work with members of the neighborhood and Montgomery County Parks Department to ensure the information is appropriate for the park.

On behalf of the thousands of residents in the metropolitan Washington, DC area who daily use the Capital Crescent Trail, we urge you to approve the plans for the new Montgomery County Lyttonsville Park.

Sincerely,



Tony Marra

Chair of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

From: [Clark Larson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, Sept. 7, Item 7
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 5:31:09 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Greetings Chairman Harris and Planning Board Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park Facility Plan to establish a new neighborhood park in the Lyttonsville community and along the future Capital Crescent Trail.

As a resident of Lyttonsville living about a block away from this future park, I look forward to its establishment as a local amenity and rest point along the future Capital Crescent Trail. I am particularly in favor of the innovation and sustainable designs proposed by park planners, as well as the incorporation of elements of the Talbot Avenue bridge as part of the park's design.

I encourage you to vote to approve the Park Facility Plan for this new neighborhood park in the Lyttonsville community to support its continued planning and construction as the Purple Line comes to completion.

Sincerely,
Clark Larson
2307 Michigan Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: [Ginny Barnes](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park
Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 8:04:22 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I received a note to add address for protocol. Since I signed the letter as Vice-Chair, I'm re-sending with my address.

GB

To: Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board

Re: Park Facility Plan - Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville

Conservation Montgomery is a strong Parks supporter. We believe you can't have enough parkland to serve a growing community hungry for open space to stretch and relax. As we approve more dense development around transit, we need to provide sufficient access to nature for all our citizens.

Lyttonsville deserves a park. It has a long history and a desire to preserve remnants that have importance to the community. Anytime we can link a community history to proposed parkland, everyone wins. We add our organization to the many others who wish to see this park to completion. This is a good start.

Sincerely,

Ginny Barnes
10311 Glen Rd. Potomac, Md. 20854 ~ (301)762-6423

Vice Chair
Conservation Montgomery Board
ConservationMontgomery.org



From: [The Pinteas Whites](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for the New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, Sept. 7, Item 7 -- River Pinteas White
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 10:02:59 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hi I'm River! I'm 12 years old, and I live on Hanover St. I've known the Talbot Avenue Bridge all my life. I remember watching trains go by, eating ice cream on the bridge, going to bridge events and winning prizes for knowing how many wooden planks were on the bridge. I remember biking over the bridge with my friends and connecting with the community in Lyttonsville, but most of all I remember just having the bridge there. That's why when the bridge was torn down I was sad that I would not be able to do those things anymore. Yes if all goes well there will be a new bridge that we won't have to worry about collapsing if something too heavy goes on it. But it won't be the same. That's why when my mom showed me the design for the new neighborhood park in Lyttonsville and how it might have a bridge memorial that will have some of the original pieces of the bridge, I was very happy that we might be able to have parts of the bridge still with us. I also like the idea of the small play area so that kids could enjoy a little bit of fun. Also the plants would add a nice effect. That's why I'm hoping this dream will come true. Thank you for your time and have a good day.

**River Pinteas White
2008 Hanover St
Silver Spring, MD 20910**

P.S. Here is a photo of me and my friend when we were younger at the Talbot Avenue Bridge Spring Party counting planks with Elmorias



From: [Marcie Stickle George French](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: SSHS SUPPORTS Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park & Talbot Ave Bridge Memorial 9/7/23 PB Hearing
Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 6:29:58 AM
Attachments: [SSHS Endorses Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park W Full CIP Funding, PB Hearing 9 7 23 TH.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please Distribute to Planning Board Chair & All Planning Board Members, 9/6/23, Please Confirm Receipt

Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park: Silver Spring Historical Society Statement Enthusiastically Supports & Endorses! 9/7/23, Planning Board Hearing, by Marcie Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair & George French, SSHS Board Member

The Silver Spring Historical Society enthusiastically supports & endorses the new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park and Talbot Ave Bridge Memorial to be created from the historic bridge girders! Park and Memorial resonate with Lyttonsville's unique story.

Design of the new welcoming Park is superb, eloquent, engaging! [new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park](#)

We enthusiastically support Lyttonsville's Neighborhood Park's critical inclusion for Full Funding in the FY 25-30 Capital Improvement Program!

SSHS was honored to serve on the 2018 Talbot Ave Bridge Centennial Planning Committee. SSHS serves also on the Lyttonsville History Committee founded by original Lyttonsville residents Patricia Tyson and Charlotte Coffield.

Marcie Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair, & George French, SSHS Board Member, 510 Albany Ave, Takoma Park, MD 20912, 301-587-5955, marcipro@aol.com

Eloquent Background:

<https://northwoodside.org/2019/11/07/farewell-to-a-historic-bridge/> <https://northwoodside.org/2019/11/07/farewell-to-a-historic-bridge/>

Please Distribute to Planning Board Chair & All Planning Board Members, 9/6/23

**Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park: Silver Spring Historical Society Statement
Enthusiastically Supports & Endorses! 9/7/23, Planning Board Hearing, by Marcie
Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair & George French, SSHS Board Member**

**The Silver Spring Historical Society enthusiastically supports & endorses the new
Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park and Talbot Ave Bridge Memorial to be created from the
historic bridge girders! Park and Memorial resonate with Lyttonsville's unique story.**

Design of the new welcoming Park is superb, eloquent, engaging! [new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park](#)

**We enthusiastically support Lyttonsville's Neighborhood Park's critical inclusion for
Full Funding in the FY 25-30 Capital Improvement Program!**

**SSHS was honored to serve on the 2018 Talbot Ave Bridge Centennial Planning
Committee. SSHS serves also on the Lyttonsville History Committee founded by
original Lyttonsville residents Patricia Tyson and Charlotte Coffield.**

**Marcie Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair, & George French, SSHS Board Member, 510
Albany Ave, Takoma Park, MD 20912, 301-587-5955, marcipro@aol.com**

Eloquent Background: <https://northwoodside.org/2019/11/07/farewell-to-a-historic-bridge/>

From: [Jeremy Wells](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Planning Board mtg. on Sep 7 for Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville
Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 10:34:41 AM
Attachments: [J. Wells - Testimony for Sep. 7, 2023 Planning Board mtg.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please refer to my attached PDF for my written testimony for the Planning Board meeting tomorrow.

Thank you,

-Jeremy

Jeremy C. Wells, Ph.D. • Principal (he/him)
240.258.8032 | jeremy@heritagestudies.org | heritagestudies.org
7304 Carroll Ave., #190, Takoma Park, MD 20912 (USA)





September 5, 2023

Planning Board Chair
Montgomery County
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Testimony for Planning Board meeting on September, 7, 2023 for a Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville

I am submitting this written testimony in support of the facility plan to create a neighborhood park in Lyttonsville. I strongly encourage the Planning Board to approve this plan, including assuring funding is allocated for its construction.

For context, although I am currently a resident of Takoma Park, I was a resident of the Rosemary Hills neighborhood from 2017 to 2019, and, during this time, learned of the area's history. I was especially curious about Rosemary Hills' historical association as a segregated, sundown community and the role of the Talbot Avenue Bridge in literally and metaphorically connecting the African American community of Lyttonsville with the white community of Rosemary Hills. It was shortly after my move to Takoma Park that I began working with the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee and helping them to achieve their goal in trying to preserve and interpret the bridge. Some of this work included providing opportunities for my students to learn about the significance of the Talbot Avenue Bridge and document the oral history of its African American residents.

I was a tenured historic preservation professor at the University of Maryland until I left in 2022 to start my consulting business. For the past two decades, my research has focused on how historic environments affect people psychologically, including identifying how design and age characteristics of places lend them a sense of authenticity. In other words, I study how historic places feel "real" to people.

I strongly support the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee's recommendation that the girders from the bridge should be kept together and used to reconstruct, as much as is feasible, the original form of the bridge. It is critical that the elements of the bridge be recognized as an

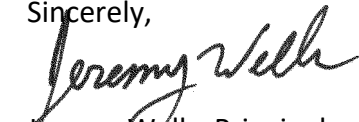
Testimony for the September 7, 2023 Planning Board Meeting
September 5, 2023
Page 2

historical bridge to observers in the park, otherwise the meaning of the bridge will be lost. It is for this reason that I was pleased to see Ching-Fang Chen's design that has addressed this legibility issue and strongly encourage the Planning Board to require that this aspect of design be realized.

In summary, it is crucial that the Planning Board approve the facilities plan for the Lyttonville neighborhood park, especially the proposed reconstructed bridge design, to honor the memories of the African American people who lived, worked, and experienced discrimination in this part of Silver Spring. The park has the potential to serve as an important reminder of the injustice of the past and to make sure that this history is not forgotten. The park also has the potential to bring the diverse residents of this area of Silver Spring together in reflection, discussion, and healing, which has long been a goal of the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee.

Thank you for your careful review of this facilities plan and your full consideration of the community's needs in its approval.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Wells, Principal
jeremy@heritagestudies.org

From: [Roger K Paden](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony Items 6 and 7, Sept 7 session
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 9:52:35 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

TO: THE CHAIR AND THE MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING BOARD
FROM: ROGER PADEN
RE: AGENDA ITEM 6 AND 7, SEPTEMBER 7

Although I strongly support the New Lyttonsville Park and encourage you to approve the design and fully fund the proposal, I would like to raise two minor quibbles with the design.

(1) I think that the skate spot is out of place. Not only will the spot introduce additional sporadic noise into the park, but I think that, if it attracts users there may be conflicts between spot users and trail users, who will be moving at different speeds. I urge you to save some money and eliminate the skate spot.

(2) There is a telephone pole adjacent to the memorial. This is unfortunate. It would be good if it could be moved so as to avoid this jarring juxtaposition. Money saved on the skate spot could be used to move the pole.

Roger Paden
2209 Richland PL
Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: [Anna White](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for New Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park, Sept. 7, Item 7 (and CIP Forum, Item 6) - Anna White
Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 12:35:51 PM
Attachments: [LyttonsvilleNeighborhoodParkTestimony_AnnaWhite.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

September 6, 2023

Dear Chairman and members of the Planning Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for the facility plan for the future new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park and for full funding of the park in the 2025-30 CIP Budget.

And I'd like to share my personal story of coming to learn about the history of the Talbot Avenue Bridge and Lyttonsville, as I believe it is relevant to the great importance of the future park to local residents, as well as the broader Silver Spring community.

The Talbot Avenue Bridge: A Portal into Local History

I moved to North Woodside into a house on Hanover Street, just a block and a half from the Talbot Avenue Bridge site, in 2009, a little over 14 years ago. I immediately fell in love with the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge. Crossing the wooden planks of the one-lane bridge, and looking down the tall-leafy-tree-lined tracks, one could imagine being out in the country somewhere, not a mere half mile from the nation's capital. The bridge quickly became a frequent destination for train watching, a favorite activity of my then toddler son.

For many years I enjoyed living near the quaint little bridge, crossing frequently back and forth over it by foot, bike, and car, while remaining completely ignorant of its history and that of Lyttonsville on the other side. Nor did I know much at all about my own neighborhood's history.

Popular narratives of Silver Spring history with which I became familiar nostalgically described how Francis Preston Blair came to found Silver Spring, waxed poetic about the architecture of buildings in downtown Silver Spring, and highlighted great businesses of old that people—somehow always White, though I wasn't initially conscious of this—once enjoyed frequenting. I had no idea that Blair enslaved Black people; that 50 neighborhoods in the area, including my own, once had racially restrictive deed covenants that prohibited Black people from living in them, except as domestic servants; and that Black people were once regularly denied service at many local businesses. Some of this history is quite recent—neighbors in Lyttonsville lived through it—but I was ignorant of it. Indeed, this history is completely absent from the most well known published book about Silver Spring history.

In September 2016, I came across an article in the Washington Post article, A Montgomery bridge that linked black and white neighborhoods during segregation soon will be lost to history, by Katherine Shaver (<https://wapo.st/4869ocu>) and was blown away to learn more about the history of the bridge. My enhanced understanding of its meaning to Lyttonsville

residents led me to feel even more strongly about the importance of its longterm preservation. I kept the newspaper clipping with the photo of lifelong Lyttonsville resident Charlotte Coffield at the bridge on my cluttered dining room table for months, as a reminder of my intention to reach out to her. Amidst the busyness of life with two young children it kept not happening though.

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On the Talbot Avenue Bridge later that afternoon, I had the great privilege of meeting lifelong Lyttonsville resident Charlotte Coffield for the first time. It was a moving experience for me, and there and then I pledged my precious little extra free time to doing all I could to elevate the history of Lyttonsville. At the end of the event, I asked public historian David Rotenstein what I could do and he suggested attending IMPACT Silver Spring's T3 meetings. T3, I learned, stands for Truth, Trust, and Transformation, and is an initiative focused on strengthening capacity at the individual, neighborhood, and systems level to break down barriers; to see ourselves as having equal value; and to create networks of connection, mutual support, and action across lines of difference—so we can build a more equitable Montgomery County where everyone can have a full and quality life. Through T3 meetings I learned so much, for example, how Roscoe Nix led the way to desegregate businesses in downtown Silver Spring and how there is no public monument to his efforts anywhere there (our group was working to rename a street adjacent to the site of the restaurant where he was denied service after him), and I got acquainted with Lyttonsville civic leaders, who later graciously invited me and other community members, from both sides of the bridge, to work with them to plan the bridge's Centennial Celebration.

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side of the bridge decades prior, with North Woodside residents advocating to close it permanently to cars and Lyttonsville and Rosemary Hills residents advocating to keep it open. The battle played out in letters to the editor, news articles, visits with elected officials, yard signs, protests and vandalism (by unknown individuals opposed to the reopening of the bridge). And I learned about firsthand experiences of racial bigotry that current and former Lyttonsville residents once experienced in my neighborhood, as children and adults, on the same street that I was now raising my young children. I did not live in the neighborhood when these incidents happened and I was not personally responsible for them. At the same time, I felt a strong personal responsibility, as a resident of the neighborhood where they occurred to contribute to healing these community wounds of the past that still festered to present day.

The Talbot Avenue Bridge: Inspiring Community Connection, Education, Action and Racial Reconciliation

It was a distinct pleasure to contribute to the planning of the Talbot Avenue Bridge's 100th birthday celebration. I will not go into the details of that or further efforts since by the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee, of which I am a member, to preserve parts of the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge, to educate our community about its history, and to organize events that bring together the neighbors on either side.

I would like to mention one project we were involved in though, University of Maryland historic preservation class project to research historic homes. The instructor had originally hoped for her students all to be assigned historic homes in Lyttonsville. Unfortunately so few are left that they could only identify three to research and decided to expand the project to historic homes in North Woodside. As it turns out there is a plethora of 90+ year old homes in North Woodside, one of which I live in. It is interesting that Lyttonsville, which is much older than North Woodside, has so few, a fact about which volumes of history that could be written, detailing racial inequities in urban development, historic preservation, and more. And it underlines all the more to me why saving the girders of the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge is so important. Almost all historically significant structures in Lyttonsville—the churches, school, and homes—have already been razed.

Incidentally, while trying to identify houses in North Woodside that might have some connection to Lyttonsville, I contacted a former Lyttonsville resident, who once told me her mother and grandmother worked inside North Woodside homes. Via zoom, we did a virtual walking tour of my neighborhood and, lo and behold, turns out it was my house her grandmother likely worked in (and if not it, the one next door which is near identical in style). This is but one of many examples of how the increased connection between current and former residents of Lyttonsville and North Woodside residents have contributed to deeper mutual understanding of our connected history.

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classes.

As the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee once titled a presentation they gave at University of Maryland, the Bridge that once divided the communities of Lyttonsville and North Woodside, is beginning to unite us. It is not a complete process, rather an ongoing effort. And it will need to continue as our neighborhoods turn over and new and younger people—who lack knowledge and understanding, as I once did, of the history of where they live—move in. We will need to continually educate. This work is not done. In many ways it is just starting.

Bridges are symbolic. Think of the meaning of the phrases “to burn bridges” and to “build bridges.” In life we are continually presented with the opportunities to either—metaphorically, but sometimes literally—burn bridges or build bridges. The Talbot Avenue Bridge is my inspiration to endeavor to always choose the latter. It is not always the easy choice. It can be difficult, uncomfortable, and challenging to communicate and work with those with whom one has fundamental disagreements and differences in understanding. But, in my opinion, it is almost always the healthier option in the long run for stronger relationships and community. Building bridges calls on us to be curious about others, to seek more to understand than to be right, and to offer grace and compassion, as we don’t know what it is like to walk in others’ shoes. It also calls on us to seek the truth, however uncomfortable and painful it may be, and to be accountable for past mistakes.

At the Bridge event led by David Rotenstein back in 2017, he stood in the middle of the Talbot Avenue Bridge, the historical dividing line between White and Black spaces, and noted that in the middle of the bridge there is “no other side.” That remark has stayed with me since, inspiring me to metaphorically seek that middle space, a space that allows for discovery and dialogue between both “sides.”

The Importance of the Future Neighborhood Park in Lyttonsville

I fear this testimony is a bit too long-winded and focused on myself, but I am sharing it nevertheless, because I believe my personal story of how the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge has served as a teacher of local history for me illustrates how it can also serve as a teacher for the broader community. And I also believe that the ultimate legacy of the bridge is that it brought neighbors on either side together. And that is an important part of the bridge’s story that needs to be told as well, as our community, and nation, continues to grapple with the insidiousness of racism, both overt and unconscious, individual and systemic.

North Woodside does not have, as yet, any formal park space of its own. The new neighborhood park in Lyttonsville will thus be the closest park to me when it is completed and I very much look forward to visiting it. The design that Ching-Fang Chen came up with is absolutely beautiful, and I can’t wait to see the transformation of this small, treeless, contaminated piece of land into a park that both uplifts Lyttonsville history and is also just a great place to hang out. Adequate funding will be needed to deal with the contaminated soil and to restore the deteriorated historic bridge’s girders. I would argue that their condition is directly related to the racial inequities that Lyttonsville has experienced over the course of its history and that these present a moral reason to make available the necessary funds to turn the park design into reality. It feels like the least that can be done for a community that has so much borne the brunt of racial segregation and its legacy. The value of the park to the local and wider community is beyond measure.

I wish such a beautiful park with a nature play area had been around when my children were younger, and decades ago when North Woodside and Lyttonsville neighbors fought over the fate of the Talbot Avenue Bridge's future. Perhaps if there had been a park space where families with young children from both sides of the bridge could have had the opportunity to meet and get to know each other—and if the history of Lyttonsville had been more widely known—the relations between communities may have taken a different path years ago. Who knows. What I do know is that ignorance of this history has indeed directly and negatively impacted relations between the communities connected by the bridge and it is through our delving into this history together that we have been able to come together in a way that was not possible years ago.

There is an impact from not just what history we tell, but what history we don't tell. The history of Lyttonsville is part of the larger history of Silver Spring. One could argue that it is "Black history," but in a way that serves to marginalize the local history of racial segregation, which one could say is just as much, if not more, "White history." A more inclusive history of Silver Spring would weave the experience of Black residents throughout and illuminate the broader social history of its spaces and buildings, not merely their architectural significance. (For example, over the years, I came to know how the AFI Theater was saved and the Tastee Diner was moved, without also learning that Black community members were unwelcome in both long ago.) It is vital that historic preservation efforts not just focus on the architectural significance of structures, but also their compelling social histories. The future neighborhood park promises to do just that.

We can't change the past, but we can do things differently in the future. As a county, we need to account for past mistakes and do what we can to rectify them. The future park in Lyttonsville provides one such opportunity.

The old steel girders may look like junk to the casual observer, but to those who know and love the bridge, they are deeply meaningful. I am grateful to the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge for teaching me so much about where I live. Even more, I am grateful to the bridge for the dear cross-bridge friendships it has fostered.

I submit this testimony in favor of the park, and also in loving memory of the Talbot Avenue Bridge—may its demolition be not an end but a new beginning—and in honor of dear friends in Lyttonsville, who, thanks to "The Bridge," I now feel so deeply privileged to know.

Sincerely,

Anna White
2008 Hanover St
Silver Spring, MD 20910

September 6, 2023

Dear Chairman and members of the Planning Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for the facility plan for the future new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park and for full funding of the park in the 2025-30 CIP Budget.

And I'd like to share my personal story of coming to learn about the history of the Talbot Avenue Bridge and Lyttonsville, as I believe it is relevant to the great importance of the future park to local residents, as well as the broader Silver Spring community.

The Talbot Avenue Bridge: A Portal into Local History

I moved to North Woodside into a house on Hanover Street, just a block and a half from the Talbot Avenue Bridge site, in 2009, a little over 14 years ago. I immediately fell in love with the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge. Crossing the wooden planks of the one-lane bridge, and looking down the tall-leafy-tree-lined tracks, one could imagine being out in the country somewhere, not a mere half mile from the nation's capital. The bridge quickly became a frequent destination for train watching, a favorite activity of my then toddler son.

For many years I enjoyed living near the quaint little bridge, crossing frequently back and forth over it by foot, bike, and car, while remaining completely ignorant of its history and that of Lyttonsville on the other side. Nor did I know much at all about my own neighborhood's history.

Popular narratives of Silver Spring history with which I became familiar nostalgically described how Francis Preston Blair came to found Silver Spring, waxed poetic about the architecture of buildings in downtown Silver Spring, and highlighted great businesses of old that people—somehow always White, though I wasn't initially conscious of this—once enjoyed frequenting. I had no idea that Blair enslaved Black people; that 50 neighborhoods in the area, including my own, once had racially restrictive deed covenants that prohibited Black people from living in them, except as domestic servants; and that Black people were once regularly denied service at many local businesses. Some of this history is quite recent—neighbors in Lyttonsville lived through it—but I was ignorant of it. Indeed, this history is completely absent from the most well known published book about Silver Spring history.

In September 2016, I came across an article in the Washington Post article, *A Montgomery bridge that linked black and white neighborhoods during segregation soon will be lost to history*, by Katherine Shaver (<https://wapo.st/4869ocu>) and was blown away to learn more about the history of the bridge. My enhanced understanding of its meaning to Lyttonsville residents led me to feel even more strongly about the importance of its longterm preservation. I kept the newspaper clipping with the photo of lifelong Lyttonsville resident Charlotte Coffield at the bridge on my cluttered dining room table for months, as a reminder of my intention to reach out to her. Amidst the busyness of life with two young children it kept not happening though.

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On the day I finally found time to sit down and watch The Bridge film, I also had a chance to attend a 15th anniversary screening of the documentary film “Silver Spring: Story of an American Suburb” at AFI Theater, as well as a community educational event led by public historian David Rotenstein on the Talbot Avenue Bridge. The contrast in perspective between the two films was incredibly stark. The small mention of Lyttonsville in the 15-year-old documentary felt more like an afterthought, easily forgettable; indeed I had seen the film years before and not particularly remembered this section, nor fully realized its connection to where I now lived. The small discussion panel after the screening decidedly lacked any diversity. I later learned that AFI theater had declined community members’ request to expand the voices on it and that the filmmaker himself was largely ignorant about key aspects of Silver Spring history and how it was once a sundown suburb. I would have liked to have had Charlotte Coffield, who at one time was not allowed to attend movies at the theatre, be part of the panel to share her perspective of Silver Spring history.

On the Talbot Avenue Bridge later that afternoon, I had the great privilege of meeting lifelong Lyttonsville resident Charlotte Coffield for the first time. It was a moving experience for me, and there and then I pledged my precious little extra free time to doing all I could to elevate the history of Lyttonsville. At the end of the event, I asked public historian David Rotenstein what I could do and he suggested attending IMPACT Silver Spring’s T3 meetings. T3, I learned, stands for Truth, Trust, and Transformation, and is an initiative focused on strengthening capacity at the individual, neighborhood, and systems level to break down barriers; to see ourselves as having equal value; and to create networks of connection, mutual support, and action across lines of difference—so we can build a more equitable Montgomery County where everyone can have a full and quality life. Through T3 meetings I learned so much, for example, how Roscoe Nix led the way to desegregate businesses in downtown Silver Spring and how there is no public monument to his efforts anywhere there (our group was working to rename a street adjacent to the site of the restaurant where he was denied service after him), and I got acquainted with Lyttonsville civic leaders, who later graciously invited me and other community members, from both sides of the bridge, to work with them to plan the bridge’s Centennial Celebration.

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Sincerely,

Anna White
2008 Hanover St
Silver Spring, MD 20910



September 4, 2023

Dear Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

We write you to express our strong support for the future new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park's facility plan and full funding of the park in the 2025-30 CIP Budget.

Who We Are

The Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee is composed of residents of Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills and our mission is to: preserve saved parts of the Bridge, educate about the history of the Bridge and racial segregation in Silver Spring, organize social events that build community between neighbors connected by the Bridge, and serve as a resource for others working on related projects. We want to ensure that important parts of Silver Spring's history are not erased.

In 2018, Lyttonsville civic leaders convened a committee to plan the Centennial Celebration of the Bridge and invited neighbors from both sides of the Bridge to be part of the effort. On September 22, 2018, approximately 300 people attended the celebration which featured a formal program of speakers, musical performers, a Bridge pop-up museum, an oral history station, a community art project, an art show, a community pie exchange, and more. In June 2019, the Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee received the Montgomery County Civic Federation's Wayne Goldstein Award for their work for racial reconciliation and preservation of elements of the historic bridge to educate future generations about segregation in Montgomery County's history.

Our committee is an outgrowth of the Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee and subsequent Bridge-related events that neighbors connected by the Bridge organized leading up to the Bridge's demolition in Summer 2019: the Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk (November 2018); *Silver Spring: A Sundown Suburb in the Capital's Gateway*, a lecture by public historian David Rotenstein (April 2019); the Talbot Avenue Bridge Spring Party (May 2019); and, on the eve of the Bridge's closure, the Talbot Avenue Bridge Candlelight Vigil (June 2019). You may find more information about many of these events, including photos and videos, at talbotbridge100.org and in the presentation, *The Bridge that Divided Us, Begins to Unite Us*, that our committee gave at the University of Maryland (October 2019), at bit.ly/UMDpresentation.

Following the demolition of the Bridge in 2019, we have served as a symbolic “human Talbot Avenue Bridge,” keeping our communities connected, while we wait for the completion of the new and bigger concrete Talbot Avenue Bridge to physically reconnect the neighborhoods in which we reside. During this time we have continued to organize the annual Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk, which for the past three years has traversed the mile distance from one side of the new Talbot Avenue Bridge construction site, in North Woodside, to the other, in Lyttonsville, weaving together neighborhoods once divided by racial segregation. All community members are welcome and encouraged to join us in shining our lights in the darkness, promoting unity over division, remembering the past and taking steps toward a brighter future.

A Brief History of the Talbot Avenue Bridge

Located a mile from downtown Silver Spring, Maryland, the Bridge was the last remaining historically-significant structure of the historically African-American community of Lyttonsville, founded in 1853 by a free man of color, Samuel Lytton. Built in 1918 from an old B&O railroad turntable, the steel and wood Bridge served as a lifeline to Lyttonsville residents through much of the 20th Century, when this Washington, DC suburb was starkly racially segregated and approximately 50 neighborhoods, including North Woodside on the other side of the bridge, had racially restrictive deed covenants that prohibited African Americans from owning property or living in them, except as domestic servants. Current and former Lyttonsville residents have memories of racial bigotry experienced in North Woodside as late as the 1990s, and periodic efforts by North Woodside residents to permanently close the Bridge with the stated reason of reducing traffic, were perceived by Lyttonsville residents as racially-motivated. Lyttonsville fought successfully to keep the Bridge open, however, tensions from these battles remained. In 2017, the Bridge was found unsafe and once again closed to vehicular traffic. In June 2019, the Bridge was fully closed for demolition to make way for Purple Line light rail construction. A month later the steel girders were lifted away by crane, ending the Bridge’s over one century of service.

While the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge may be gone from the space it occupied for so long, it lives on in the parts that have been saved, in the many meaningful community connections that it fostered and continues to foster, and through the Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee. It is our fervent desire that the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge’s next chapter will be in the form of the Bridge Memorial in the new neighborhood park in Lyttonsville, as so beautifully and thoughtfully designed by the Montgomery Parks team led by Ching-Fang Chen.

The Importance of the Bridge Memorial

Silver Spring is one of the most diverse suburban areas in the U.S., yet there is not a single monument dedicated to African American history near its urban core. Creating a Bridge Memorial in the new Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park will help rectify this

egregious oversight and raise awareness about aspects of Silver Spring history that have been largely erased from official histories of the suburb and about which there is widespread ignorance. While the neighborhood park may be small in size, the historical importance of the Bridge Memorial to Lyttonsville, adjacent communities and indeed the wider Silver Spring community and Montgomery County on the whole is immense.

The original design concept for the new neighborhood park in Lyttonsville did not incorporate the historic bridge's girders in a way that was satisfactory to our committee and three local civic associations. As we wrote to Montgomery Parks, following the second community meeting on the park, "we believe that [the girders] should be kept together and arranged so that they are immediately recognizable as a bridge and remind visitors and residents of the role that the bridge played in the history of the community." Ching-Fang Chen's team went back to the drawing board and came up with a truly beautiful design that meets all the criteria that we were looking for in a Bridge Memorial.

While structurally-speaking it may not be an actual bridge, the Bridge Memorial will be built to feel like one, and more specifically, to recall the look and experience of crossing the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge. Like the historic Bridge, which served as an entryway to Lyttonsville, the Bridge Memorial will serve as an entryway into the park and a symbolic entryway into the history of Lyttonsville. The Bridge Memorial will help make alive the history of the Bridge and Lyttonsville in a way that is near impossible to do through merely words and pictures.

While the historic Bridge can no longer span the train tracks where it once did, placing the Bridge's girders in the park is the next best location. The Bridge Memorial will be located just a block down the street from—and in eyesight of—the historic girders' previous location. This close proximity will serve to connect the physical parts of the Bridge with their historical location, the site of the new Talbot Avenue Bridge, and thus connect past and present, old and new. The new neighborhood park's location is also just blocks away from the Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Center, where we hope to one day establish a Lyttonsville History Museum. Signage at these and other future Lyttonsville history sites could enhance the synergy between them and further promote greater awareness about the local Black history.

The park site also happens to be located in close proximity to two elementary schools: Rosemary Hills Elementary School, one block away, and Woodlin Elementary School, a few blocks away in North Woodside. Young children often learn best through stories and hands on activities, and the Bridge Memorial could serve as an excellent teaching tool for young students learning about local Black history. For example, a class field trip to the Bridge Memorial could help make more alive the history of Lyttonsville, allowing students to connect stories related to the historic Bridge to the physical experience of it. Already MCPS has begun to incorporate local Black history, including information about Lyttonsville, into his curriculum at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee would love to work with MCPS

curriculum content specialists on a curriculum focused on Lyttonsville History, using the Bridge Memorial as a portal into it.

The Park: A Space for Community Building and Healing

Beyond the Bridge Memorial, of which we have a particular interest, we believe the overall design of the future neighborhood park in Lyttonsville will provide a beautiful, shady, and peaceful gathering place for community members, with more intimate spaces for individuals and small groups to occupy and a larger grassy outdoor amphitheater area that would be perfect for larger community social events and gatherings. After the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge was closed to cars but remained open to pedestrians and bicyclists we held a number of community events on it, as outlined above. Community members also organized more impromptu social gathering on the Bridge, such as children's book readings, fox kit watching parties, and music playing. With the demolition of the historic Bridge we lost this much loved community "third space." We envision the future park filling again this important niche that we've been missing.

We look forward to the park being a space where neighbors from both sides of the train tracks will have the opportunity to cross paths and get to know each other. The children's nature play area, the tables, the proximity to the train tracks, the amphitheater area, and the Capital Crescent Trail alongside will all naturally invite community members to stop by the park—to play, to have a picnic, to read a book, to meet up with others, to watch trains, and to rest. Located in Lyttonsville, in very close proximity to both North Woodside and Rosemary Hills, the park will facilitate mingling between residents of these three neighborhoods tied together by geography and history.

Our committee also looks forward to organizing community social events in the park that further connection and a shared sense of community between residents of the three neighborhoods adjacent to the bridge and beyond. For example, the park would be an excellent starting point for our annual Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk. Community members could gather with their lanterns in the amphitheater area, with the Lantern Walk commencing by crossing the Bridge Memorial. It could then continue up Talbot Avenue, over the new Talbot Avenue Bridge, around a block in North Woodside, back over the new bridge, and then around a block in Lyttonsville, ending back at the park for hot drinks and refreshments. This is but one of many community events we can imagine for the space.

Thank you for your careful consideration of our testimony. For all the reasons outlined above, we strongly encourage you to approve the facility plan for the park and full funding for its construction. And if approved and funded, we are committed to supporting the successful completion of the park in any way we can, from working closely with the design team on historical signage to soliciting community feedback on any park design elements that require further fine-tuning.

Sincerely,

The Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee*

*Charlotte Coffield, Lyttonsville
Anna White, North Woodside
Eva Santorini, Rosemary Hills
Elmoria Stewart, Lyttonsville
David Cox, North Woodside
Joel Teitelbaum, Rosemary Hills
Pat Tyson, Lyttonsville
Merrie Blocker, North Woodside*

** While our Committee is currently made up of eight individuals, many dozens more community members—including artists, musicians, photographers, film makers, public historians, historic preservationists, civic leaders, and many neighbors—have contributed their time and talents to events we have organized. We recognize and are grateful for all of their contributions.*

We may be contacted at talbotavenuebridgecommittee@gmail.com or c/o Pat Tyson, 2300 Michigan Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910 or c/o Anna White, 2008 Hanover St., Silver Spring, MD 20910

For more information about the history of the Talbot Avenue Bridge, we highly recommend the following:

The Bridge, 16 minute documentary by Jay Mallin (a professional videographer and Rosemary Hills resident)

vimeo.com/232023048

Talbot Avenue Bridge: The Historical Connection, a 6 minute documentary by local videographer Brigitte Yuille (filmed at the Talbot Avenue Bridge Spring Party, May 2019)

youtu.be/yb65_i0UuPw

Public historian David Rotenstein's collection of writings on the Talbot Avenue Bridge (his research and advocacy served as a foundation for our community collaboration; he was also a member of the Talbot Avenue Bridge Centennial Committee)

blog.historian4hire.net/talbot-avenue-bridge-collection

Historic American Engineering Report No. MD-195 on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Metropolitan Branch Bridge 9A (Talbot Avenue Bridge) (this 91 page document, by public historian David Rotenstein, provides the most definitive history of the Talbot Avenue Bridge)

www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/item/md2205

P.S. We welcome members of the Planning Board to attend the 6th Annual Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk, scheduled for Saturday, November 11, 2023 (rain date: Sunday, November 12, 2023). For further information, and videos and photos of previous Lantern Walks, go to **bit.ly/TABLanternWalk**.

**LYTTONSVILLE CIVIC ASSOCIATION
NORTH WOODSIDE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
ROSEMARY HILLS NEIGHBORS' ASSOCIATION**

September 5, 2023

Dear Chairman and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

As presidents of the three civic associations that surround the future neighborhood park in Lyttonsville, we write to request that you approve the design for the park, as well as the accompanying budget request for the funds necessary to realize the design.

The park's design is the product of a long and fruitful collaboration between the park planners and local residents from all three neighboring communities. The park staff have created a wonderful and fitting design that fully meets the expectations of community residents. The design effortlessly solves several challenges and problems inherent in the site's topography. It provides the community with a beautiful place of quiet retreat and a rest stop for those who pass the park on the future Capital Crescent Trail.

Of particular importance, the plan promises to memorialize the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge and the role it played in the history of Lyttonsville and neighboring communities, thereby providing a place to learn about, and remember, the important and not well-known history of racial segregation in Montgomery County.

As those who crossed the historic wood-planked bridge know, it had a voice. The Bridge Memorial will be a meaningful visible symbol through which the bridge may continue to speak to our community of neighborhoods and all who visit the park, sharing stories from the past that carry bold messages for present and future generations.

We look forward to the park further strengthening our three neighborhoods' connection, by providing a space where community members young and old, of many colors, backgrounds and places of residence, can meet and get to know each other, and deepen their understanding of the history of where they live.

The new park will be a valuable addition to both the local community and the county.

Sincerely,

Patricia Tyson,
President, Lyttonsville Civic Association

Genevieve McDowell Owen
President, North Woodside Citizens Association

Linda Greenwald
President, Rosemary Hills Neighbors' Association

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Correspondence from Tonya Saffer (Adjacent Property Owner)

I am terribly sorry, but I am not able to stay as I have a 4p.m. meeting for work. I am putting my testimony in chat in hopes it can be considered this way. **"Thank you for the opportunity to comment today in strong support for the Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park design and full funding for park construction in the 2025-30 Capital Improvement Budget.**

My name is Tonya Saffer and I'm proud resident of Lyttonsville. I have lived on the corner of Pennsylvania and Michigan with family for 9 years and a resident of Silver Spring for 16 years. We love this community, its diversity and its rich history. And I see my neighbor and beloved Civic Association President Pat Tyson there in the room. Ms. Tyson and Ms. Charlotte Coffield were the ones who took the time to teach me and my family about the rich history of this community, deepening our love and respect for our neighborhood and particularly the history of the Talbot Ave bridge uniting Lyttonsville with North Woodside and providing a connection into downtown Silver Spring. We felt that the park planners took time to hear from the Lyttonsville residents us about the history of our community, our attachment to the Talbot Ave Bridge, and they thoughtfully memorialized the bridge and its symbolism in the park design. I look forward to bringing my son to the local park and kicking around the soccer ball and playing tag, to seeing bikers, along the eventual restoration of the Capital Crescent trail, stop for a respite and enjoying our community and to gathering with my neighbors. My family and I encourage you to fully fund the park in the upcoming budget. Thank you for your time today!"