

## Item 8 - Correspondence

**From:** [ben.sandler@yahoo.com](mailto:ben.sandler@yahoo.com)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Findley, Steve](#); [Lindsey, Amy](#); [Tettelbaum, Emily](#); [Michaela Reich](#)  
**Subject:** comments for board meeting  
**Date:** Monday, August 28, 2023 9:55:51 PM

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

MCP and Emily-

Good evening. My wife and I reside at 10960 Bloomingdale Drive within the Mains HOA, and this email serves as our personal official written comments submitted for the Planning Board meeting on 7 September. Our comments are as followed below:

Overall, we would like to highlight that given the close proximity between the Woodward High School, the stadium, as well as other athletic fields- with the Mains HOA, we urge the Planning Board to take maximum measures to ensure residential privacy and security.

-To the extent possible, we urge the Planning Board to plant and maintain a maximum amount of large trees along the property line adjacent to the Mains HOA. The purpose of these large trees should be to maintain residential privacy/shielding between the school and the nearby residents.

-We also urge the Planning Board to consider a Sound Retention Barrier along the property line adjacent to the Mains HOA that would reduce/minimize sounds generated during athletic events at the school.

-We urge the Planning Board to consider replacing and upgrading the existing chain-link fence to provide greater security protection for the adjacent residential properties.

-Lastly, we urge the Planning Board to remove the rear-gate along the fence-line adjacent to the Mains HOA, as well as to remove the proposed trail entrance between the Timberlawn Park and the Woodward High School property. Removing these rear and side entrances will help to increase the security of the surrounding residential communities and prevent otherwise likely off-campus student "hangout"/congregation spots within the residential communities.

Many thanks for your consideration of these comments.

Should you have any questions regarding our comments, feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,  
Ben Sandler and Michaela Reich  
Phone: 301-651-3529

**From:** [HAL SHELTON](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** 9/7/23 Public Hearing Woodward School Expansion Project--Phase 2 comments  
**Date:** Friday, September 1, 2023 6:15:23 PM

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

Henry Shelton  
5828 Edson Lane  
N Bethesda, MD 20852

Re: Woodward High School Expansion Project—Phase 2

September 1, 2023

Montgomery County Planning Department  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
2425 Reddie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)

Dear Park and Planning,

I am submitting comments on the Montgomery County Board of Education's Phase 2 application for the Woodward High School Expansion Project at this time as I will not be able to attend the September 7, 2023 public hearing.

Referencing the various documents, the Montgomery County Board of Education submitted to support its application:

1. Traffic Study

<https://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/UFS/34233/109664/13-TS-MR2023017.pdf/13-TS-MR2023017.pdf>

- This was conducted in 2019 with an update in early 2020, and thus it is very out of date e.g., it has Old Georgetown Road as a 6-line divided

highway, when currently it is a 4-lane divided road

- Traffic counts need to take into account post-pandemic activity
- Traffic movements and access need to take into account the bike lanes
- There is no reference to the proposed school bus routes. There should be no school buses on Edson Lane other than to pick up/drop off students. Edson Lane was not designed as a through street.
- At a recent Hess Construction monthly community update, the Hess representative indicated they requested a right turn lane into the school, heading north on Old Georgetown; but it was rejected. Traffic in front of the school could be a mess and dangerous during school hours. And more so if emergency vehicles are using the bike lanes to get through backed-up traffic
- If the commission accepts the Traffic Study as submitted, it will set a bad precedent for other applications using information not current at the time of application review/approval.

## 2. Stormwater Management Concept Plan (several attachments)

- These are concepts and plans; reality could be different. I am sure the Board of Education will tout the professional and educational accomplishments of the plans' creators. But once on paper, the facilities need to be implemented/built and maintained.
  - The Board of Education and its contractor have shown little regard for the environment as evidenced by their razing the lot of all of its trees without notice to the surrounding property owners. On a smaller scale, but indicative of a lack of abiding by rules, there continues to be water runoff onto Old Georgetown Pike. Neighbors to the east of the property can address water and debris runoff during the early days of Phase 1 construction.
  - Almost every spring, the Board of Education makes the community aware that the budget amounts proposed by the State and County need to be increased. With limited funding, teacher compensation, staffing levels, abiding by state mandates, etc. will have higher

priorities than maintaining and correcting drainage issues caused by its building program.

- To protect the surrounding property owners in the case that the stormwater concepts do not function as planned, the Board of Education (or its contractor) should be required to post a \$25 million bond in escrow for 15 years to repair any water run-off from the property and reimburse property owners for damage to their properties.

### 3. Lightening Plan (several attachments)

- Several drawings show where the lighting poles will be located. However, there are no pictures of the types of lighting that will be installed. It should be stipulated that no light is seen outside the property.

### 4. Justification for Tree Variance

<https://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/UFS/34233/109664/16-VAR-MR2023017.pdf/16-VAR-MR2023017.pdf>

• The submitted justification does not meet the test for granting a variance. Primarily, since the noted hardship is a “self-inflicted” hardship.

The Board of Education has owned the tract for many years and is familiar with its topography and the applicable zoning/land use and other requirements.

The Board of Education admits that it will be damaging trees and tree roots on trees, not on its property.

The Board of Education decided to request approvals in two steps. If it had followed the traditional approach of planning the whole site at the outset, it could have found solutions that fit the tract and the codes. If I were a cynic, I would think that the Board of Education knew that there would be problems with their plans and followed the 2-step approach to pressure the Commission and adjacent landowners to grant the variance to complete the project.

- Thus, the Application response: "Montgomery County Public Schools has

taken no *actions leading to the conditions or circumstances* that are the subject of this variance request” is not a true statement

- One of the Board of Education’s responses states: "A robust tree mitigation plan is proposed to provide both canopy coverage and evergreen screening. Additional canopy planting will serve to create greater ecological quality while establishing further buffering of adjacent land uses (residential)."
  - What is the “robust tree mitigation and maintenance plan?
- If the commission sees fit to grant the variance even though it is a self-inflicted problem, the Board of Education should be required to provide a \$10 million bond in escrow for the maintenance of the mitigation plan for the same reasons as noted for the storm-water management plans—limited Board of Education budgets and neighborhood concerns about the priority of maintenance.

#### 5. Participants in the Community Design Process

<https://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/UFS/34233/109664/16-BOEPPP-MR2023017.pdf/16-BOEPPP-MR2023017.pdf>

- The Commission should take this PR piece listing about 275 "Participants in the Community Design Process", with a grain of salt. The Board of Education wants to tout how they have reached out to the community and had much community involvement in the planning for this large school facility expansion. Those there at the time, know that this was not the case. And as we remember, there were a few vocal voices and many just listening in—hard to say they were participating.

Sincerely,  
Henry Shelton

**From:** [CHARLES BROWNSTEIN](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Thank you for your message  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 9:39:48 AM

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

Re submission of mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements, my address is:

Charles Brownstein  
10962 Bloomingdale Drive  
Rockvill, MD 20152

(A copy of the comments submitted is appended below your reply.)

On Sep 6, 2023, at 9:27 AM, MCP-Chair <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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Dear Planning Board Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments, for consideration and for the public record, to the Montgomery Count Planning Board pertaining to:

The Woodward High School Phase 2 Hearing of September 7, 2023  
Mandatory Referral Plan MR 202317  
Forest Conservation Plan F20230360

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors of The Main Homeowners Association. The Mains is a community of 61 homes located contiguous to the Woodward High School property. The shared property line, marked by a fence at the south eastern edge of the school property, is located approximately ten feet from the rear of the homeowners properties. These are the closest private properties to the school, located adjacent to proposed Woodward stormwater runoff and athletic facilities, and reforestation tree plantings. As a result, we have four main concerns, as follows:

1) Planting and Reforestation:

We appreciate the time taken by Emily Tettelbaum, Steve Findley and other staff members of

the Planning Board and MCPS to meet with us, and for their responsiveness to our requests, as per the plans sent to us on August 30, 2023. We are pleased by their commitment to using the reforestation requirement to create a maximally dense sight and physical barrier along the southeastern boundary between The Mains and the school property. This boundary is approximately 10 feet from the rear of homes and the sports infrastructure and stormwater runoff infrastructure. We thus have several outlying concerns pertaining to reforestation.

First, we need to stay engaged with MCPS and the Planning Board about this area. We would like as planning progresses to be informed and consulted on details such as distance from property line fence to trees and maintenance plans. We note that MCPS has historically not maintained the plantings on its side of the fence bordering the Mains, and this has necessitated an expense by The Mains community to remove tree and shrub overgrowth. MCPS needs to plan and inform us of its efforts at adequate maintenance.

Second, we should like an alteration in the construction plans that show a new paved path just beyond a proposed shot-put triangle behind the visitor grandstand. The proposed path should be removed and trees planted or retained in its place. If constructed it would lead up to a locked gate in the fence that marks the property line of The Mains approximately 90 yards from the southeastern-most edge of the Woodward property.

There has never been paved path on school property at that location. There was a dirt footpath through formerly protected specimen trees now scheduled to be removed, that led through a gate to an asphalt bike path on The Mains property. This had in the recent past been a source of undesirable foot traffic day and night, with attendant nuisance noise and refuse on The Mains side. We have been promised repeatedly that that this access gate is to be removed. The Mains will likely remove the asphalt path on its side of the fence to that gate. Hence there will be no access to or from its property. There is thus an opportunity to plant additional trees in this area, or to retain the specimen trees now present.

Finally, to this last point, we should also like MCPS to move the proposed shot-put (and possibly the javelin throw triangle) area from the planned location immediately adjacent to The Mains homes, to inside the stadium boundary (as they are typically). Instead, we should like MCPS to consider adding additional trees behind the visitor grandstand to mitigate undesirable sight lines, noise and student access to the property fence area.

## 2) Access via Timberland Park to Woodward High School

We want open public discussion and reconsideration of the plan to link Timberlawn Park to the school property via a new path from Timberlawn Park and an open gate at the school. This uncontrolled access point was a former Planning Commission staff member requirement of MCPS that was never subject to public discussion or official review. We believe that it is both unnecessary and undesirable in that it creates both a public nuisance and a severe security risk to the school and the adjacent communities.

We were informed by Planning Board and MCPS staff that the reason for requiring the new path was to provide community access to sports facilities on the school property. We believe this access path is unnecessary and undesirable. Public access to MCPS recreation facilities was successfully provided from Old Georgetown Rd throughout the original Woodward and subsequent middle school history. That limited and controlled means of access did not dampen broad community use of the school facilities. It provided for both visitor parking on school property, and access control inside the school boundary by school authorities. These desirable

qualities will be totally lost if there is a new 24/7 open “back door” from Timberlawn Park via the new proposed path. This will in addition, destroy the community nature of the park and make it a transit pathway. The Mains residents have expressed concerns about potential parking and traffic nuisances on its private roads, to the point of considering installing access gates and removing paths on its property that now provide access to Timberlawn park.

Moreover, the path and open gate will create a security risk for the nearby communities and for the school itself. There is currently no lighting in the park and it is very dark at night. There is no access control to the park or from the park along streets and paths that lead to The Mains or other contiguous communities. Uncontrolled transit through the park to and from the school will thus create new security risks for the contiguous communities, as well as for MCPS property and students. The many instances of violence at and near schools, ranging from inter-school student fights after sporting events, to individual and mass shootings, indicate a need for open public discussion of this plan.

Before proceeding, any plan for use of such an entrances must have an associated MCPS and Montgomery County security plan for Timberlawn park and the adjacent communities. Creating and operating such a plan must involve all adjacent communities, the Parks department, MCPS and Montgomery County law enforcement agencies.

### 3) Stormwater Runoff Infrastructure

Our experience thus far in Woodward construction has included a drain engineering error that caused a major runoff event that put mud and water a hundred yards into the Mains property. We fear that MCPS has not planned for extreme conditions, let alone likely future climate change. We would like the currently planned facility at the southeast-most part of the MCPS property to be expanded so as to increase runoff capacity. This can be done reasonable economically by adding additional chambers to the planned runoff control infrastructure under the area beneath the proposed javelin triangle. In addition, we should like to see and be informed about planned maintenance schedule for the planned infrastructure.

The Mains Homeowner Association looks forward to your reactions to these comments and to continued interaction about Woodward High School,

Respectfully,

Charles Brownstein  
(for The Mains HOA)

(end)



**From:** [Susan Bender](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Tettelbaum, Emily](#); [Susan Bender](#)  
**Subject:** Bender Testimony 09-06-23 - Sep 6, 2023  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 11:11:11 AM  
**Attachments:** [Bender Testimony 09-06-23 - Sep 6 2023 - 11-06 AM.pdf](#)

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

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Planning Board Members:


The following written testimony is submitted by Susan and Bruce Bender for the meeting to be held on September 7, 2023, with respect to agenda Item 8.

We are the owners of a home which directly borders the eastern side of the Woodward High School property, behind the baseball field at the northeast corner. We have lived here since 1992, over 30 years. When the property was Tilden Middle School we often heard ball games and grew used to the noise in the afternoon. Just before Tilden M.S. was demolished a team brought in a portable sound system to announce players and call the game – that was quite loud and disturbing, since the speaker seemed to be pointing directly at our home. We are concerned that a high school will have more frequent and later games than the middle school with more attendance and noise.

In addition, I understand from Mr. Deraleau, the MCPS project manager, that we will have a tall 13' retaining wall built a few feet behind our yard next to the school property. Needless to say, stormwater runoff is a big concern for our yard below this wall.

We request that appropriate sound, light and tree mitigation, and stormwater mitigation be used on the school's eastern boundary for Timberlawn homeowners as is being done for Devonshire and Mains homeowners on the south and southeast boundaries.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Susan and Bruce Bender  
5828 Magic Mountain Dr  
Rockville, MD 20852

**From:** [Tettelbaum, Emily](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Timberlawn HOA Testimony- Sept 7,2023 - Sep 6, 2023  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 11:19:50 AM  
**Attachments:** [Timberlawn HOA Testimony- Sept 7,2023 - Sep 6 2023 - 10-09 AM.pdf](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)

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**Emily Tettelbaum**

**Planner III, Midcounty Planning Division**

Montgomery County Planning Department  
2425 Reddie Drive, Floor 14, Wheaton, MD 20902  
[emily.tettelbaum@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:emily.tettelbaum@montgomeryplanning.org)  
o: 301-495-4569



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**From:** Susan Bender <susanbender9@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 10:14 AM  
**To:** MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Cc:** Tettelbaum, Emily <Emily.Tettelbaum@montgomeryplanning.org>; Betty Romero <bettyromero@me.com>; Allee Burka <allee.burka@gmail.com>; Andy Stadnik <andy@stadniks.com>; Dean Levitan <dlevitan@me.com>; Susan Bender <susanbender@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Timberlawn HOA Testimony- Sept 7,2023 - Sep 6, 2023

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

Sent from my iPhone

September 6, 2023

Dear Planning Board Members:

The following written testimony is **submitted by Timberlawn Homeowner's Association** ("Timberlawn HOA") for the meeting to be held on September 7, 2023, with respect to agenda Item 8.

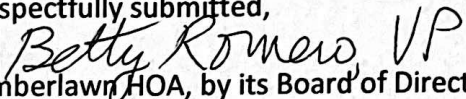
Timberlawn HOA represents 126 homeowners, several of which directly border the eastern side of the Woodward High School property.

These homeowners' backyards border the proposed baseball and softball fields at the northeast corner of the school property. Other Timberlawn homeowners along Mossrock are just north of the Mains townhouse HOA and are very near the stadium. Some homeowners will have tall retaining walls built at their rear property line next to the school property.

**We request that appropriate sound, light and tree mitigation be used on the school's eastern boundary for Timberlawn homeowners** as is being done for Devonshire and Mains homeowners on the south and southeast boundaries.

We also note that on the revised plan the east side storm water management areas appear to have been reduced in size and it is unclear where the overflow drain is being routed around or under the stadium. Some of our Timberlawn homes have an elevation that will be 13 feet below the new fields and runoff is a prime concern.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Timberlawn HOA, by its Board of Directors

Betty Romero, Vice President  
5811 Magic Mountain Dr  
Rockville, MD 20852

**From:** [Daniel Dellatorre](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Findley, Steve](#); [Tettelbaum, Emily](#)  
**Subject:** Woodward High School-Phase 2-community member comment for hearing on September 7, 2023  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 11:21:16 AM

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

Dear Chair of Planning Board,

Phase 1 of the new Woodward High School required the demolition of a tall chimney tangent to Tilden Middle School. Large, uncapped chimneys, such as the one demolished provide almost all the roosting and nesting habitat for Chimney Swifts. Chimney Swifts are a Neotropical migratory bird that are experiencing rapid and unsustainable population declines and their conservation is a major initiative of the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership. In keeping with making the new Woodward High School a “green” building, I would like MCPS to build a replacement roost before Woodward is reopened. I have spoken to several individuals at MCPS Division of Design and Construction about this but have received no commitment. A simple, cost-effective brick chimney to provide direly needed habitat for a declining bird species is the responsible thing to do.

Daniel Dellatorre  
14 Magic Mountain Court  
North Bethesda, MD 20852

301-787-6223  
[ddellatorre@gmail.com](mailto:ddellatorre@gmail.com)

**From:** [Bart Gerstenblith](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Tettelbaum, Emily](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Planning Board Meeting 9/7/23; Written testimony from DEHOA re agenda item - Woodward High School - Phase 2  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 11:32:08 AM  
**Attachments:** [Written Testimony - Woodward High School - Phase 2 \(B. Gerstenblith Devonshire East\).pdf](#)

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

Hello,

I received an automated message stating that a mailing address is required for noticing. The address is:

11140 Cedarwood Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Thank you again,  
Bart

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**From:** Bart Gerstenblith  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 6, 2023 11:24 AM  
**To:** [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org) <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)>  
**Cc:** [Tettelbaum, Emily](mailto:Emily.Tettelbaum@montgomeryplanning.org) <[Emily.Tettelbaum@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:Emily.Tettelbaum@montgomeryplanning.org)>  
**Subject:** Planning Board Meeting 9/7/23; Written testimony from DEHOA re agenda item - Woodward High School - Phase 2

Good morning,

Please accept the attached written testimony in response to the following agenda item for the Planning Board meeting tomorrow, Thursday, September 7, 2023:

Woodward High School – Phase 2  
Mandatory Referral No. MR2023017  
Forest Conservation Plan No. F20230360

I appreciate the opportunity to submit the attached statement. I also look forward to presenting live testimony at the hearing tomorrow in-person.

Thank you again,  
Bart

Bart Gerstenblith

President, Board of Directors  
Devonshire East Homeowners Association, Inc.  
(443) 802-5568

Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

September 5, 2023

Re: Woodward High School – Phase 2  
Mandatory Referral No. MR2023017  
Forest Conservation Plan No. F20230360

Dear Montgomery Planning Board:

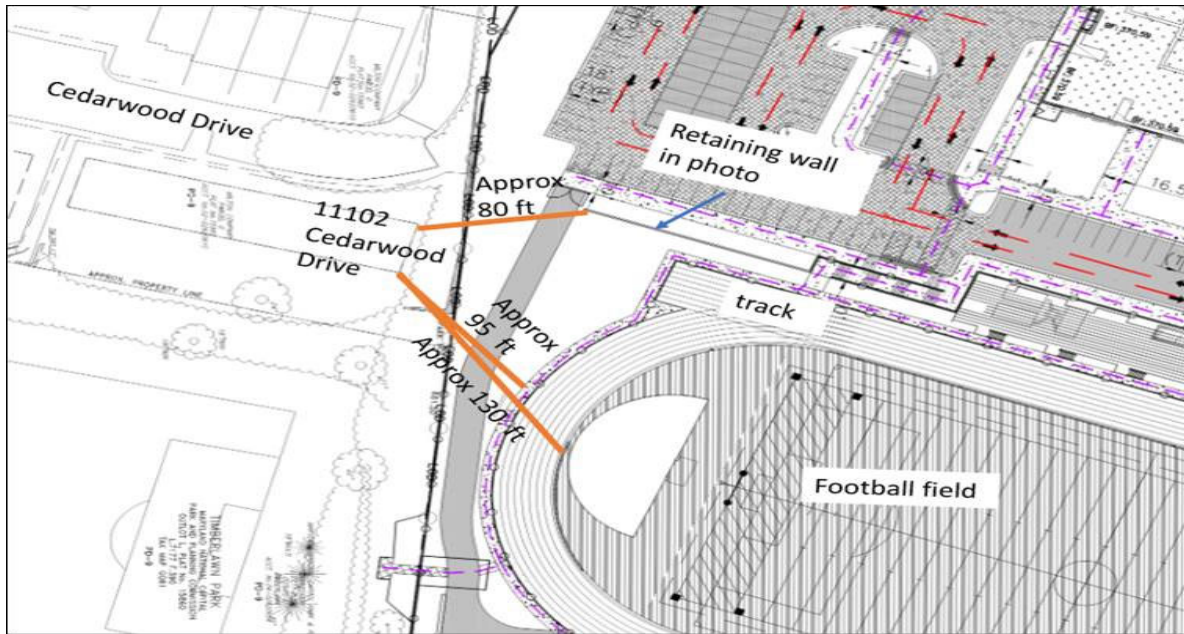
I am the President of the Board of Directors of the Devonshire East Homeowners Association, which consists of 134 homes in a neighborhood that shares a border with Woodward High School (to the south of the school). We respectfully request that the Planning Department modify several of the recommendations in the Planning Staff's report.

**Critical attention is needed by the Board** because the proximity of Woodward High School and its athletic fields to neighboring homes, including Devonshire East, is unique; there are no barriers such as trees or streets between the closest housing and the high school. The Staff Report discussing the Mandatory Referral Phase 2 and Forest Conservation Plan does not sufficiently address two critical issues—**sound and lighting**.

### **Noise and the Need for Noise Reducing Barriers**

The image below, which was provided by the Montgomery County Planning Department, shows the proximity of Woodward High School (distance), and particularly the stadium, to our community. It provides a valuable frame of reference for considering the issues we face and the impact of the development on our community. In particular, our homes sit within 100 feet of the planned stadium.





Because of the close proximity of the stadium to neighboring homes, at a minimum, noise reduction designs must be implemented (and, as discussed further below, limitations imposed on school-use and community use of the athletic fields). Options to reduce noise do exist. These may include noise reducing barriers, sound blankets, and other concepts such as roofs for bleacher seats.

We appreciate the Staff's Report requirement that MCPS work with our community and the Mains to provide sound mitigation measures. (See pages 2, 13-15.) Sound reducing measures have not been shown to have any feasibility issues. Thus, there is no reason MCPS cannot add sound mitigation measures to the stadium design and grounds.

### **Stadium Lighting**

A second critical issue is to minimize the impact of the stadium and athletic field lighting on the surrounding communities. Eliminating stadium lighting from 11pm through 7am is a good idea, but that range is too wide. **Stadium lighting should not be used after 9pm** given the close proximity of the stadium to the neighboring homes. Lights at the stadium after 9pm will have an unduly negative effect on the surrounding communities and homes. Thus, we request that lighting not be used from **9pm-7am**.

### **Breezeway (Old Georgetown Road)**

The Staff Report recommends exploring the widening of a pedestrian refuge at the entrance to Cedarwood Drive. To the extent this is explored, the Planning Board should make it clear that Devonshire East shall have an equal voice in the design and plans since the pedestrian refuge sits at one of the two vehicular access points to our community and therefore has an effect on traffic in our community.

### **Other Submissions**

A detailed statement that expands upon many of the issues addressed above, and which was submitted for the Staff's review, is included with the Staff's Report as pages 60-68 of Attachment F to the Report. A detailed statement sharing similar views and concerns regarding the proximity of the stadium and athletic fields to neighboring homes is presented by The Mains homeowners association, which is also included in Attachment F the Staff's Report. Community views should not continue to be minimized as Woodward High School's redevelopment has had and will continue to have a major impact on the lives of those living in the neighboring communities.

### **Thank You for Supporting the Community**

Thank you for your careful review and understanding of the unique circumstances our community faces in light of the extremely close proximity of the proposed stadium. I look forward to highlighting some of these issues during my live testimony before the Board.

Sincerely,

*Bart A. Gerstenblith*

Bart A. Gerstenblith  
President, Board of Directors  
Devonshire East Homeowners Association, Inc.