

From: [Beth Meyer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Fwd: Comments on MR2026004
Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:49:03 PM
Attachments: [Save Joseph's Park Handout.docx](#)

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

Dear Mr. Leftwich,

I am writing regarding MR2026004, the mandatory referral for the sale of Joseph's Park in Kensington.

I want to give you a fuller picture of the amount of support there was among Town residents to save Joseph's Park. The Mayor and Town Council Introduced Ordinance No. O-01-2025, at the January 8, 2025, Town Council Meeting, which proposed the sale of 3420 Plyers Mill Road (Joseph's Park). There were a few public hearings beginning on February 12. These were without exception publicized poorly and at the last minute to Town residents. Even with the poor advance notice, there were always a number of residents and nonresidents at the hearings who were vocal about their reasons to preserve their neighborhood park. The moderators would often discuss that Joseph's Park was not utilized. While the lack of anything but mature trees has not prevented residents from frequenting the Park, some amenities would have been welcomed. The lack of improvements could easily be remedied and multiple suggestions were made. The Town has made significant improvements to other parks in the town but deliberately neglected Joseph's Park. Our neighbor repeatedly offered to buy a bench for the Park. These offers were ignored. The Town has invested no money on benches or landscaping. Joseph's Park is the only town park without a Swain sculpture. Even with just trees, the Park was frequented by residents which the moderators would deny.

In March 2025, the Town Council took a vote. Two Council members were for the sale and two were against. Mayor Tracey broke the tie and was for the sale. In my opinion, the action should have stopped there pursuant to the Town Charter section 411 (b), which reads, "Neither the Mayor, the Town Council, nor any member or representative thereof shall present to the Montgomery County Council, the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission... or any official proposal or recommendation for the more intensive use of land within the corporate limits of the Town than has been approved by said Park and Planning Commission (i) unless said proposal or recommendation has been approved by the Mayor and all members of the Town Council in a recorded vote on the specific proposal." Despite that, the Town proceeded.

With that, the best way to save the Park was to collect enough signatures for a referendum to put the fate of the Park to a vote. 362 signatures (20% of registered Town voters) were needed for this referendum. Last spring buoyed by the passionate pleas of neighbors upset by the possible sale of Joseph's Park, I decided to collect signatures for a referendum and assembled a team of 13 Town residents to go through the streets of Kensington so residents could decide the fate of the Park. In three weeks, we got 402 signatures of confirmed town voters—well over the 362 required. In addition, we got around 50 signatures of residents in

town that we could not confirm were town voters and signatures of around 270 non-Town residents. These nonresident votes were, of course, not counted but show that our neighbors also felt strongly about saving the Park.

Two days before the June 2 election, Mayor Furman's cover page article in the Town newsletter endorsing the sale went out to all Town residents <https://tok.md.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/MayJune-2025-web-Journal.pdf>. Residents who were opposed to the sale were not invited to state their opinions in the Town newsletter. The official newsletter of the Town should either have been a mere announcement of the election or represented both sides. I feel that this article significantly skewed the election result and that endorsing a voting position in her official capacity as Mayor on an upcoming vote was unethical. In fact, the Mayor was publicly rebuked at a subsequent board meeting by another Town resident. Unfortunately, the results were 236 for the sale and 111 to save the Park.

Finally, in reviewing the Statement of Justification, it lists Joseph's Park's "small size, lack of accessibility, topography, and lack of improvements" as reasons to sell. The size is actually bigger .17 versus .14 than 10800 St. Paul Park and comparable in size to the Kensington Crossing Park if you subtract the unusable creek. It is also more accessible than 10800 St. Paul Park. As for the lack of improvements that has historically been a choice of the Town's to neglect it. Joseph's Park is used as it is but has the potential to be far more if the Town chose to value and invest in it.

Attached is the handout that we distributed on election day summarizing our reasons for wanting to save the Park.

I hope that you will take this information into consideration while reviewing the Town's application.

Sincerely,

Beth and Larry Meyer



Virus-free www.avg.com

Vote Against Question A

Save Joseph's Park

- Selling parks for cash isn't who we are as a Town.
- Selling a park would set a bad precedent.
- Once sold the park will be gone forever.
- A piece of the Town's history would be lost.
- Our parks are not rainy day funds.
- There is no current financial emergency. Many other options for funding projects exist.
- Even the Town Council was split.
- There is significant opposition within the Town.
- Town residents DO use the park.
- Even with new land purchases, losing the park would reduce overall greenspace.
- Planting trees does not replace mature trees that would be lost.
- Town has never invested in the park. Many options for enhancement are available.
 - Community garden
 - Outdoor exercise equipment
 - Pollinator garden
 - Historical marker
 - Benches and /or swings

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [NONA OLSON](#)
Subject: 3420 Plyers Mill Road Mandatory Ref. No. MR2026004
Date: Sunday, March 1, 2026 3:21:43 PM

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Re: opposition to the sale of Joseph Park

We have lived in the Town of Kensington since 1989. We live one block from Joseph Park. We have always loved the open spaces and mature trees that define the Town. Over the years the efforts in sprucing up the Town parks have increased and a Greenscape working group was established. The Town qualified as a Tree City USA through the Arbor Day Foundation and continues to replant and maintain the tree canopies that we value. Requirements such as setbacks that exceed the county's offer additional protection to our open spaces as development increases.

The Sector Plan revision was brutal but the 2012 plan ultimately reflected compromise and support. The 2019 Town of Kensington Design and Development Review Workshop summarized the community feedback with interests such as "greener development and more community green space" and "areas for community to gather". The resulting 2012 Kensington Sector Plan was created to set the tone and guide for the next 20 years. In the opening Introduction of the Kensington Sector Plan Design Guidelines, those early interests are carried forward with the statements "The Kensington Design Guidelines represent the County's, Town of Kensington's and the community's design aspirations for the future of Kensington...An urban design strategy should serve as an integrating tool to coordinate how various proposals will affect the Town physically, with a principal focus on the public realm:...spaces for public use...parks, and plazas that provide the outdoor public venue for everyday activities."

The sale of Joseph Park in no way reflects the resulting vision behind the 2012 Sector Plan and in fact, contradicts the very theme of open space and community enjoyment. As children grew, they outgrew blankets on the Joseph Park grass and gravitated toward St. Paul Park, one house away, and its playground equipment. Residents made requests to the Town council for benches, and were denied, and requests were made by residents for permission to provide benches, and they were also denied. A tree inspection by a licensed arborist occurred in early 2023. It was reported that of the 6 trees and 2 yews, 4 were excellent, 2 were good and 2 were fair. The trees included a cedar, 3 ash, and 2 black walnuts. It's interesting to note that the State of Maryland had recently passed HB631/SB470 promoting land conservation and the Montgomery County Council had recently passed the Forest Conservation Bill 25-22 expanding forest planting and forest conservation. The Arbor Day Foundation has reported that a mature tree absorbs 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, replacing it with oxygen, and a mature tree can absorb pollutants from a car driven 26,000 miles - facts particularly relevant for a park with mature trees

located on Plyers Mill Road. The arborist's report outlined needed maintenance, but that maintenance was never performed.

Kensington's history began as Joseph Park thru a land grant from the Lord Proprietary Charles Calvert of 4,220 acres to Mr. William Joseph in 1689. The land was used for agriculture until his son sold it to Mr. Daniel Carrol in 1736. Mr. Carrol was one of only 5 men to sign both the Articles of Confederation (1777) and the Constitution (1787). He sold several parcels of land to local farmers and Kensington's current day form came about from Mr. George Knowles' property following the construction of the Metropolitan Branch line from DC to Point of Rocks in 1873. How fortunate we are to have this remaining undeveloped parcel which should be celebrated, not sold.

Joseph Park, sitting at the corner of Plyers Mill Road and Wheatley Street, has the potential for pollinator gardens and a quiet respite. Benches arranged like those in the Clum Kennedy Park, located on Kensington Parkway, would provide a welcome place to sit or gather. All parks do not need to be animated. And while the Town has stated they are looking at alternative sites, one such site at 10800 St. Paul Street in the recently annexed section is a block from University Blvd and will initially be utilized for storm water management activities, and the second site located in part of the Kensington Crossing HOA property, floods when Silver Creek overflows. Both additions are valuable for storm water management activities, but they don't replace an existing park and it's a step back to lose an existing park under the guise that the Town can't afford the additional purchases.

The sale is also not consistent with the theme of the 2012 Kensington Sector Plan. The north side of the Town of Kensington has two parks: Joseph Park and St. Paul Park. If Joseph Park is sold we are left with one, primarily dedicated to the activities of sports teams, birthday parties, a Montessori school and daycare centers. We are lucky to have St. Paul Park with its space that can accommodate such needs. But ignoring the wishes of those who have been very vocal in wanting to retain Joseph Park and see it reach its potential in a different way, is again contrary to what we all fought so hard to retain back in the years prior to 2012.

Respectfully Submitted

Leslie Olson
Scott Goode


Kensington, MD

From: [Al Carr](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Harris, Artie](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Kronenberg, Robert](#); [Linden, Josh](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#)
Subject: Testimony in opposition to the sale of Joseph's Park (Item #6: mandatory referral MR2026004)
Date: Monday, March 2, 2026 12:26:49 PM
Attachments: [Carr testimony on Josephs Park mandatory referral MR2026004.pdf](#)

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Please see attached.

Thank you.

Al Carr


March 2, 2026

Re: Mandatory Referral No. MR2026004 Wheatley Subdivision - 3420 Plyers Mill Road (Joseph's Park)

Dear Chair Harris, Vice Chair Linden and Commissioners Pedoeem Bartley, and Hedrick.

Please deny Mandatory Referral MR2026004 per the concerns outlined below.

The Planning Board's mandatory referral authority is a unique tool that is intended to improve transparency and afford quality community planning and development advice to the public sector for projects affecting our natural and built environment. Such valuable authority is granted to no other planning entity outside the bicounty area. During my time in the General Assembly, I worked with your predecessor commissioners, MNCPPC's General Counsel Debra Borden and her predecessor Adrian Gardner, and Planning Director Sartori's predecessor Gwen Wright to expand and clarify this authority - over the objections of the previous Governor of Maryland.

Please do not take this authority lightly. It is important to exercise it with integrity. Proposed actions of government entities should be carefully scrutinized, not rubber stamped.

Per the mandatory referral review uniform standards document updated December 2022, the Planning Board shall consider:

- whether the proposal is consistent with the County's General Plan, functional plans, the approved and adopted area master plan or sector plan and any associated design guidelines, and any other public plans, guidance documents, or programs for the area;
- whether or not the site would be needed for park use if the proposal is for disposition of a surplus public school or other publicly-owned property; and

Carr comments on Mandatory Referral No. MR2026004 (Joseph's Park)

- whether alternatives or mitigation measures have been considered for the project if the proposal is inconsistent with the General Plan or other plans and policies for the area, or has discernible negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, the transportation network, the environment, historic resources (including burial sites), or other resources.

My principal concern about this mandatory referral is that the sale of Joseph's Park is inconsistent with the 2012 Kensington Sector Plan.

- Under Parks and Open Space, the sector plan's recommendation is to "Preserve existing designated open space in the Plan area." The plan does not envision the sale or redevelopment of Joseph's Park.
- Under Stormwater Management, the sector plan's recommendation is to "Reduce the amount of impervious surface areas to maximize infiltration of stormwater and reduce runoff." Joseph's Park is currently in a natural state, comprised entirely of grass and trees. Development would add impervious area.
- Under Environmental Sustainability, the sector plan's recommendations are to "Provide opportunities for collaborative efforts among public and private landowners to establish community gardens." and to "Increase tree canopy cover along streets and within medians, within existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and on parkland." Redevelopment of Joseph's Park would preclude its use as a community garden and would result in a loss of the existing mature tree canopy.
- Under Historic Preservation, the sector plan's recommendation is to "Re-evaluate the boundaries of the Kensington Historic District and amend as appropriate, [...] Assess the historic district boundary north of the railroad tracks and expand as appropriate." Joseph's Park abuts properties within the Kensington historic district but has not been evaluated for incorporation into the district.

My second concern is about procedural flaws that shut out public participation. Planning staff met with the applicant in August 2025. The applicant submitted the required documents to planning staff in September and October of 2025. But the documents were not posted online to the Development Application Information Center (DAIC) until mid-January 2026. Members of the public weren't able to view them or even know the name of the lead reviewer until around January 19th. This monthslong information lag hurt transparency and hindered the public's ability to comment and participate. No wonder only a single public comment appears in the staff report. The lag between the application document submittal and their online posting via DAIC is a recurring flaw in the development review process, not unique to this project.

Planning's development brochure educating the public on how to participate in development review offers the following tips: "Review the development application at montgomeryplanning.org/development under Development Application Information Center." and "Get in touch with the lead planner with questions, comments and concerns." But the public was unable to review relevant documents or identify the lead reviewer until late in the process.

My third concern is the applicant's omission of important facts. Nowhere in the application was it disclosed that the vote of the Town of Kensington's governing body on the sale of Joseph's Park was split. The March 12th, 2025 vote was tied 2-2 and the Mayor, who only votes in the event of a tie, voted in favor of the sale. The applicant also failed to disclose that the reason why the sale was put to a referendum is because more than 400 registered Town voters signed a petition, forcing the referendum. The applicant also failed to disclose that before the referendum vote, the Mayor placed a one-sided article in the Town newsletter without the opportunity for an opposing view on such a divisive issue. Public input conducted by the Town was dismissive of affected Kensington residents who do not reside within the Town's borders.

My fourth concern is that the sale of publicly owned parkland sets a bad precedent. Selling parkland should be an absolute last resort.

My final concern is the failure of the applicant to show that alternatives have been considered for a project inconsistent with the approved sector plan. The Town's motivation for selling the property is to raise funds to acquire other properties. But the sale is unnecessary because the Town has many other options to raise the needed revenue. The Town can acquire the other properties it wants without selling Joseph's Park. The other acquisitions have not been vetted through mandatory referral and are not necessarily contemplated in the Kensington Sector Plan.

For these reasons, please vote to deny this mandatory referral.

Sincerely,

Al Carr



Kensington, MD 20895

From: [Olwen Logan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Mandatory Referral No. MR2026004 Wheatley Subdivision
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 8:10:47 AM

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March 3, 2026

Re: Mandatory Referral No. MR2026004 Wheatley Subdivision - 3420 P Myers Mill Road (Joseph's Park)

Dear Chair Harris, Vice Chair Linden and Commissioners Pedoeem Bartley, and Hedrick.

I am writing to request you deny Mandatory Referral MR2026004 for the reasons identified below.

1.

Kensington's recognition on the National Register for Historic Places is in part because of its "park-like setting" in a "Victorian-era Garden Community"—a description that was likely critical to the success of the Town's National Register application. The Town's numerous public parks, along with individual private gardens, contribute to that description and, although small, Joseph's Park undoubtedly represents one of those contributing green spaces.

2.

Joseph's Park is the only site in Kensington that commemorates in any way the historical significance of the 1688/1689 Land Grant to Colonel William Joseph that is pivotal to Kensington's history.

3.

Selling parkland sets a dangerous precedent. If Joseph's Park can be sold, can any Town-owned park now be sold?

4.

Development of the park will necessitate the removal of several mature, healthy trees, which currently provide a significant tree canopy.

5.
All greenspace—regardless of its size and location—has value for the health, welfare, and enjoyment of Town residents.

6.
Joseph's Park could be dramatically improved with a small investment of Town monies. Ideas that have been suggested for its future include a pollinator garden and/or a community garden.

7.
Selling parkland to fund Town projects should be an absolute last resort for the Town. There are numerous other possible sources of funding that should be explored first.

8.
There is considerable opposition to the proposed sale. The March 12, 2025 Town Council vote was split 2-2 requiring the Mayor to cast the deciding vote. That vote prompted the launch of a petition against the sale, which was signed by some 400 residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this.

Sincerely,

Olwen Logan,



Kensington, MD 20895

From: [Amy Henchey](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written statement opposing the sale of Joseph's Park
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 11:27:09 AM
Attachments: [Henchey Joseph Park testimon 030326.pdf](#)

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

Amy Henchey

[REDACTED] (cell)

**Written Statement in Opposition to Sale of Joseph's Park
Submitted to the Montgomery Planning Board
for its consideration on March 5, 2026
by Amelia Henchey, Kensington resident**

I moved from Silver Spring to Kensington approximately four years ago. When I was deciding on a new home after my husband's death in 2020, locations in the Town of Kensington were high on my list for a couple of reasons.

First, as a resident of the neighboring North Woodside community, living close to my home of thirty plus years would help me stay in touch with long-time friends and neighbors. I watched the senior apartment building going up on Metropolitan Avenue when I took my cats to the veterinarian across the street and leased an apartment there after exploring other options in Montgomery County.

Moreover, Kensington had always impressed me as a very walkable community – its parks and tree-lined streets appealed to me as a gardener and environmentalist. I probably don't exercise as much as I should – or as much as my internist and cardiologist would like me to. Walking is high on my

list of things to do when I do exercise. And as a golfer, I subscribe to the philosophy sometimes attributed to Mark Twain of golf as a *good walk spoiled*.

As I'm getting older, I'm no longer able to walk as much as I once did, due to the development of arthritis in my spine. Joseph's Park is only a few blocks from my home on Metropolitan Avenue. It's a pleasant spot to stroll (as is the nearby alternative St. Paul Park that I take advantage of when my back cooperates). If the proposed sale goes through, I will miss the loss of that alternative.

My mailing address is [REDACTED] Kensington, MD

[REDACTED]

From: [Alicia Shekter](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Lee](#)
Subject: Wheatley Subdivision – 3420 Plyers Mill Road Mandatory Referral No. MR2026004
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 11:59:39 AM

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Dear Montgomery Planning Board,

Please find below our comments regarding the Town of Kensington's Mandatory Referral re: potential sale of Joseph's Park. We write in opposition of any such sale, and I (Alicia) look forward to providing in-person testimony at Thursday's Planning Board Meeting.

Sincerely,
Alicia and Lee Shekter

Comments:

- Town of Kensington Ordinance No. O-01-2025 was approved as the result of a tie-breaking vote by the Mayor after the Town Council members voted two for and two against the ordinance, with the Mayor noting that this was the first time in a very long time that a vote was not unanimous. The two Town Council Members voting against the ordinance concluded, after thorough review and discussion of the Town's budget with the Town Manager, that funds from any sale of Joseph's Park were not required to proceed with the Town's capital improvements plan. The recording of the Town Council Meeting should be available through the Town's website.
 - The Town's finding that Joseph's Park is not a suitable site for a park is not based on unanimous consensus of the Council Members, and is a subjective, biased judgment.
- Regarding Joseph's Park's "small size, lack of accessibility, and topography":
 - One of the "other, larger properties" identified by the Town, 10800 St. Paul Street, is smaller (0.14 acres) than Joseph's Park (0.17 acres). Further, while the Town has stated that Joseph's Park is not needed because of its proximity to St. Paul Park (one block over), 10800 St. Paul Street is directly across the street from Montgomery Parks' Kensington Heights Neighborhood Park.
 - While there is a slope along the shorter, Wheatley Street side, Joseph's Park can be easily accessed from the sidewalk along the longer, Plyers Mill Road side (see picture, below). While I personally enter Joseph's Park from whichever side my dog prefers, it is good to know that a more level entry is available from the sidewalk.
- Joseph's Park currently contains several large trees, including a very large tree on the longer, Plyers Mill Road side (see picture, below). There is a slope along the shorter, Wheatley Street side.
- Purchase of the other property identified by the town, a portion of the

Kensington Crossing HOA property, does *not* increase the amount of green space in the neighborhood – it is existing green space. Like Joseph’s Park, the portion of the HOA property west of Silver Creek is also “vacant and undeveloped” and neighborhood residents often walk through it just the way it is, including with our dogs.

- As such, sale of Joseph’s Park will *decrease* the amount of parkland/green space in the neighborhood, providing *less* room for active and passive recreation.
- Several residents have offered ideas for improvements that would work at the site, and I have offered several times to pay for improvements. That offer still stands.
- Development under R-60 zoning standards would increase impervious surface area, contradictory to the Kensington Sector Plan: “Reduce the amount of impervious surface areas to maximize infiltration of stormwater and reduce runoff” (plan page 15).
 - This is true even if a home is built with the legally required setbacks, which would limit the “footprint” of the building.
 - Any such building would require removal of at least the yew tree inside the Joseph’s Park and likely kill the large tree on the Plyer’s Mill side whose roots extend throughout the Park.
 - Further, given the size of surrounding homes, including the recently-expanded neighboring home on Wheatley Street, requests for variances to allow a larger footprint (more impervious surface area) and/or a taller building (not preserving the character of the neighborhood) may be expected.
 - The expectation of development if Joseph’s Park is sold should be explicitly addressed by the Planning Board.
 - Note: The other home abutting the property, at the corner of Plyers Mill and St. Paul Street, is a historic home.

Pictures:

Joseph’s Park: Town of Kensington WALKtober sign showing easy sidewalk access from Plyers Mill Road



Joseph's Park: A sense of scale (Lee_Sweet-Pea_and_the_big_tree_20251026_165948_markup.JPG)



The Town of Kensington's WALKtober sign in Joseph's Park reads: "**WALKtober FUN FACT 10: WALKING** IN NATURE BOOSTS MENTAL HEALTH AND REDUCES DEPRESSION. **WALKING** IN NATURE CAN SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER STRESS, ANXIETY, AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION BY REDUCING CORTISOL LEVELS AND ENHANCING MOOD: EVEN 5 MINUTES **WALKING** IN NATURE CAN IMPROVE MOOD, SELF-ESTEEM AND RELAXATION."

Additional material:

Speaking notes from December 18, 2024 Kensington Town Council Meeting:

Hi. My name is Alicia Toledano.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

My family and I have lived at [REDACTED] for a few weeks shy of 15 years.

When we moved back to the United States in summer 2009, we took a short-term

rental so we could find the best place to raise our three sons.

We chose Kensington because it is a genuine community. There is a mix of longtime residents and more recent residents, a mix of older and newer businesses and buildings, and a mix of green spaces.

Of course, being in the Walter Johnson school district was another plus for Kensington.

I'm here tonight to speak about the town's plan to sell Joseph's Park, before the January 8 meeting at which the town plans to introduce an ordinance proposing to sell Joseph's Park.

As a matter of principle, I cannot, and will not, ascribe motives to the Mayor, Town Council members, town staff, or anyone else involved in the discussions of selling Joseph's Park.

Town residents, including myself, have provided feedback in public forums including last month's Town Council meeting. As shown in town council meeting minutes, the majority of that feedback has been against the sale of Joseph's Park.

I appreciate the opportunities to provide feedback.

I wish it felt like a two-way dialog.

Selling Joseph's Park has been on town council meeting agendas since January 2023.

Since then, the town has presented multiple supports for selling Joseph's Park.

I do not recall the town saying anything positive about Joseph's Park.

One thing supporting selling the park was that it is small. At the November town council meeting residents gave feedback that being small is not a bad thing.

As a small person for the past 59 years, I was glad to hear that!

The town stated as further support for selling the park that nobody uses the park. Residents have stated that they use Joseph's Park since the first public meeting in early 2023. The town's response has been consistently dismissive.

I am not a liar. My husband is not a liar. Our neighbor Beth Meyer is not a liar. I believe fellow Kensington residents are not liars. When we say that we go to the park, it is the truth. I would like the town to acknowledge this.

The town has a Memorial Park. It is located at a triangular intersection of busy roads. Driving past, I have never seen anyone in the park. But I know – and hope – that there must be people who go to the Memorial Park. Not seeing them does not

mean that they do not go.

The proceeds from selling Joseph's Park would defray the cost of the town's purchase of other land. People have asked about other possible sources of funding for the purchases that the town wants to make. Last month we heard about increasing property taxes. Repeatedly. One of the town's residents stated that the town's response that evening was fear mongering. That is how I felt, too.

At the November town council meeting we also learned that the town had already placed bids to buy other property.

I am happy to hear resolution no. R-23-2024 about changing a project with up to eight hundred thousand dollars of funding toward buying the M&T parking lot. For reference, this amount is about twice the estimated sale price of Joseph's Park. It feels like a positive step on the town's part.

We have heard repeatedly that St. Paul Park is only a couple of blocks away from Joseph's Park. At the on-site meeting in early 2023 we were told that the town's committee for green space determined that we do not need Joseph's Park. Anyone who has been to both parks knows that they are very different.

The town talked about alternative green space and planting new trees. Residents noted that planting new trees cannot be considered a reasonable replacement for the mature trees in Joseph's Park.

We heard about safety and sidewalks, and I agree that these are important concerns. Joseph's Park meets Wheatley Street on its short side, and there is an existing sidewalk on the longer, Plyers Mill side.

Last month we heard that in exchange for donating the land that the town owns, where the current public works building is, with an estimated value of nine hundred and thirty thousand dollars, the county would donate a linear park. Council member Crimmins noted that the park would be ready to use, with benches and trees.

Council Member Crimmins, would that linear park be on this side of Connecticut Avenue?

[If on this side, say that I hope existing sidewalks will provide safe access.

If on the other side, state concern about safety crossing Connecticut Avenue.]

(Post-meeting note: Council Member Crimmins replied that the linear park would be on the other side of Connecticut Avenue, and I expressed my concerns about safety.)

On the whole, to me, it seems that the town decided to sell Joseph's Park a long time ago and the public feedback is being sought so a box can be checked on a list of things that need to happen before selling the park.

But I do think at least one of you is taking public feedback seriously. Thank you.

I think some of you heard what I and other town residents are communicating.

Thank you again, to everyone, for listening to me.

I hope everyone will have a good rest of the night and wish you all happy holidays.

Email 1:

Re: Save Jones Park x 7News (should be Joseph's Park)

1 message

Alicia Shekter <[REDACTED]> Thu, Apr 3, 2025 at 1:01 PM

To: Al Carr <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Kendall Watson <[REDACTED]>, Beth Meyer

<[REDACTED]>, Carla Rodriguez <[REDACTED]>,

Leslie Olson

<[REDACTED]>, saralizzy <[REDACTED]>, Larry Meyer

<[REDACTED]>,

michele gordon <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED],

[REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

A few thoughts based on my experience:

...

3. For me, the cleanest reason for a referendum is so residents can vote on an issue that split the 4 member Town Council as 2 in favor versus 2 against, requiring the Mayor to break the tie. As the Mayor said on March 12, it was a long time since that had happened. I think most votes are unanimous. All 4 Council Members spoke about why they voted the way they did, which should be available on the Town website. Two said the Town can accomplish its goals with wiggle room in the budget. Two said wiggle room was not enough. The argument about 1 resident = 1 vote works well for us, who want to save the park, and does not alienate people who are ok with selling the park. Their signatures can help get the referendum on the ballot.

Best,
Alicia

Email 2:

Save Joseph's Park - opposing Ordinance No., O-01-2025

1 message

Alicia Shekter <[REDACTED]> Fri, Mar 7, 2025 at 12:39 PM

To: Mayor.Council@tok.md.gov

Dear Mayor Tracey and Kensington Town Council Members,

I am writing to oppose Ordinance No. O-01-2025, which proposes the sale of Joseph's Park. I am in favor of growth and change to improve our Town of Kensington but selling Joseph's Park without thorough consideration of alternative sources of funding and the present and future impact of selling park land is not a good way to fund that.

1. Selling park land sets a dangerous precedent. This is especially for park land in a residential zone. Questions about the impact of Montgomery County's Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative only add to this concern.

2. Selling park land to fund Town projects should only be a last resort. The Town should look at a variety of other ways to raise money for Town projects, including grants. I am happy to help with that. Town of Kensington citizens deserve evidence of good faith efforts to find alternative sources of money before any decisions about selling park land are made.

3. All greenspace has value for the health, welfare, and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the Town. Joseph's Park's trees and tree canopy release oxygen, reduce pollution, and boost health and mood. The only obstacle to "activating" or improving Joseph's Park is the Town's refusal to do so. Residents have presented several ideas for improvements such as furnishings or plantings that can work with the size and topography of Joseph's Park, and I have offered funding for them.

4. Sale of greenspace for the benefit of the community should be a community decision based on complete information presented in an unbiased way. This is a very important issue. Town of Kensington citizens deserve better than being repeatedly bullied with threats to raise taxes if Joseph's Park is not sold.

I have vocally disagreed with selling Joseph's Park and supported that position several times, from the initial March 1, 2023 on-site community meeting continuing through the most recent Town Council Meeting. As noted above and in those discussions, I am happy to be part of a vibrant, growing Town of Kensington.

Please let me know how I can our Town grow and thrive without the need to sell Joseph's Park.

Sincerely,
Alicia Shekter



End of email.

From: [michele.gordon](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Planning board meeting public hearing Joseph's Park TOK Thurs. March 5
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 1:54:12 PM

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

Hello,
My letter is also below.
I stated in the intro that I just received the deadline for words shared this morning, and got out of class at noon.

Here is my address:

Michele Gordon

[REDACTED]

Kensington, Md 20895

Thank you

On Tue, Mar 3, 2026 at 1:49 PM michele.gordon <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hello,

I just received the flyer for this meeting at the start of my class time this morning, thus the late (than 12 N) reply.

I have class on Thurs, and would like my testimony to be read if possible by anyone present who is willing to present my words.

Thank you in advance.

Michele Gordon, Resident

My words are for the Planning Board directly, as well as anyone present today.

This upcoming final vote by the Planning Board will not be about simply the sale of a historic property for the intent to incur funds for the Town to use elsewhere.

We, as a community, willingly support any action that actually benefits the Town as a whole, yet, as I say that, this particular sale does not. Although the residents did appear to vote at the Town office to put forward their action on such a sale, there are literally dozens of seniors who live within the Town limits, who are:

1. unable to drive

2. cannot get to the Town office via Uber or bus

or, 3., are physically unable to travel due to being homebound for their physical self. In short, they do not have a way to get to the offices.

The Town, or possibly another service organization, has not looked at providing a fair and clear manner in which to have these worthwhile citizens have a say in Town issues, which has deterred them from having their votes count. There are at least three, perhaps more, senior living facilities here in Kensington. Many were even given the opportunity to sign the

first petitions that were made available in their building, so their preference could count, and they were. These signatures affected the outcome of the final vote at the Town level.

My second point is, exactly as stated in the Historical Society's description of how our Town was established. Keep in mind, the Park was donated land to begin the process of helping Kensington become an incorporated, legal Borough:

"Kensington's history began as Joseph's Park through a land grant of 4,220 acres, located at the time within Charles County, to Mr. William Joseph in 1689".

The fact that this key piece in our history was negated in the original plan to sell any land, should be abhorred. Isn't our history what the Town was built upon. I offer the example of years back when the "Wheaton Youth Center" site was voted down to establish it as a historic site on the State Registry; while it was a lovely building design, it did not attract any private association to help keep it historic. And this was not donated land!

I ask those present, and the Planning Board itself to look hard at what started our Town, in keeping with the written history that keeps Kensingtonians proud to reside here, and ask themselves, do we have to "give away" that part of our history?

Thank you.