

College Gardens Civic Association

816 Fordham Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850
www.CollegeGardens.org

Storm Water Management Facility in College Gardens

February 4, 2006

Dear College Gardens Resident:

I am officially informing you that the College Gardens Civic Association (CGCA) is working with the City of Rockville concerning a possible, or imminent, Storm Water Management (SWM) facility in College Gardens Park, the Forest Preserve, or both. These CGCA efforts are in reaction to a Department of Public Works (DPW) presentation to Mayor and Council on December 12, 2005. At that meeting, the DPW advocated installation of an SWM pond in the park. Mayor and Council reacted favorably to the proposal in light of City responsibilities under state and federal law. It appears that it would be difficult to stop such a facility. On the other hand, the City has offered to work with the community to consider alternative park configurations and to fund park improvements.

Despite many irritations, the CGCA has taken the strategic position to work with the City to get the best possible deal, to help find acceptable alternatives, and to define unacceptable aspects of any proposal. Safety is a prime and non-negotiable issue. It is I who raised the possibility of using part of the Forest Preserve in order to mitigate the impact of such a facility on the park.

DPW staff did not inform the CGCA ahead of time that they would re-open the issue of the use of the park for such a facility. As a result, the CGCA executive is in a position where it is reacting to this initiative in a relatively short time frame. Given the historical stances of the neighborhood concerning both the park and the Forest Preserve, the neighborhood should know what is going on. To comment, contact Mark Pierzchala at markpierzchala@cs.com. I will summarize and publish all comments on our website, maintaining confidentiality if requested. Our website, www.collegegardens.org, has a link to documentation of all important events since December 12. In this newsletter, there is a summary of the issues and maps that give context.

There are three conflicting positions held by some individuals in the neighborhood: 1) SWM has priority and this justifies a full SWM facility in the neighborhood, 2) there should not be any major impact on the park, and 3) the Forest Preserve should not be touched. The CGCA is taking the following steps: 1) work with City Staff to formulate a few alternate solutions, 2) with the City, conduct a survey concerning features in a newly configured park, and 3) present the alternatives in a CGCA membership meeting in spring 2006. It is likely that any workable alternative would involve compromise of two or all three positions.

Mark Pierzchala, President, College Gardens Civic Association

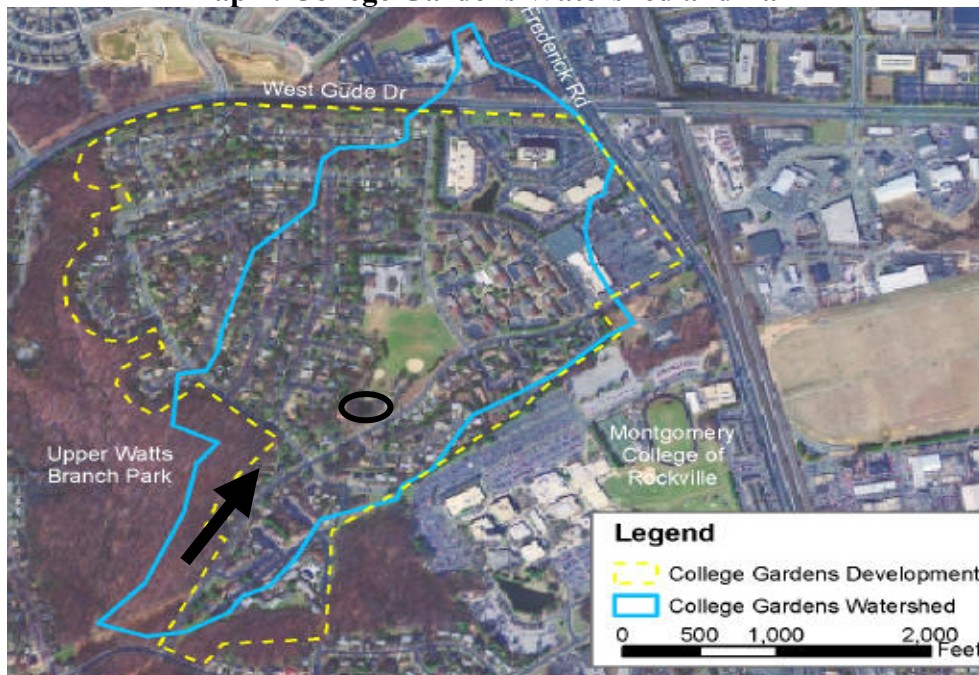
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Park and Storm Water Management Issues in College Gardens

When a large amount of rain falls in a short period of time water rushes from our neighborhood and surrounding areas into Watts Branch, the streams that run through the Forest Preserve. This storm water surge damages Watts Branch, the Potomac, and the Chesapeake in two ways: 1) it carries pollutants, and 2) the energy and volume of the storm water damages the streambeds. Much of Rockville, including this neighborhood, was built before SWM was an issue, and no provision was made for storm water control. In such a built-up area, it is difficult to find available space to implement SWM. The City cannot require private property owners to implement SWM unless the property is undergoing major renovation. The only space the City has to implement SWM is public property such as a City park.

The College Gardens Watershed (see map 1) contains 142.85 acres. About 110 (eyeball estimate) acres of this land drains into the College Gardens Tributary through a large pipe that empties into it just west of Princeton Place. The proposed SWM facility in the park would control storm water from 57.4 of the watershed acres for a 1" rain event. Storm water from Auburn and Baylor Avenues, parts of Princeton Place, Clemson Court, and a small part of Plymouth Woods would not be captured in the park because that storm water does not flow under the park. The proposed SWM facility would control about 50% of the pipe volume at its outlet into the tributary.

Map 1: College Gardens Watershed and Park



The College Gardens Watershed is in the solid line. The College Gardens neighborhood is in the dotted line. The park and school are in the middle of the watershed. The park pond is within the oval. The College Gardens Tributary starts approximately at the head of the arrow.

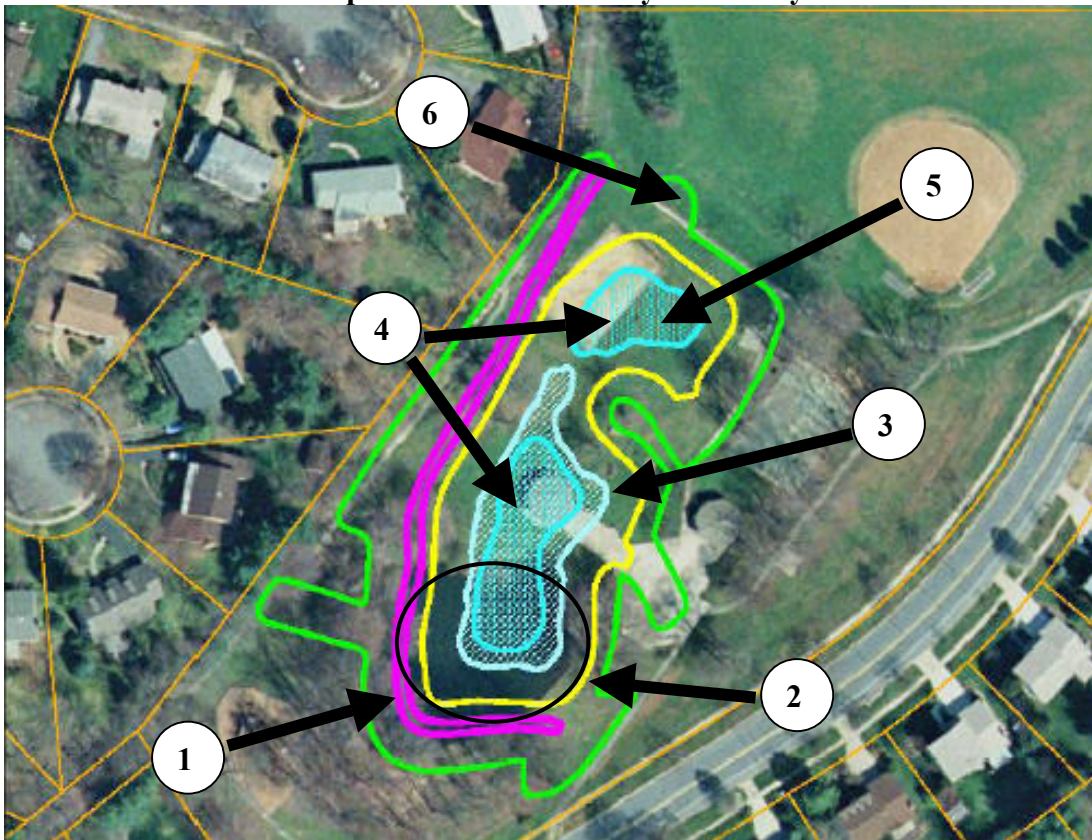
The biggest problem with controlling storm water is with its volume. Dividing 57.4 acres by 12" yields 4.8 acre-feet (upper limit) of water that must be handled by the facility. That is, a one-acre SWM pond would have to be able to rise by 4.8 feet during the storm. A two-acre pond would

have to be able to rise 2.4 feet for the same event, and so on. An SWM pond releases this water over a 24-hour period and the pond returns to its resting level. Such a pond can be constructed so that it takes up less space between storms and expands its area as it fills up. For larger rainstorms, excess water would flow over a spillway, into storm drains and directly into Watts Branch. The current pond in the park takes from about 1/3 to 1/2 acres, a size too small for an SWM pond. See map 2 for an example of the scope of an SWM facility.

There is a 54" pipe that runs underneath College Gardens Park that carries storm water from commercial property (e.g., Comcast and Celera), Yale Place, the school, Fordham Street east of Auburn Avenue, part of Gude Drive, Yale Village, and Scarborough Square. Any SWM facility in the park would tap into that pipe and divert storm water into the SWM facility.

An SWM facility normally consists of a forebay and a pond. The forebay receives the water from the pipe and is a place where trash can collect (to be picked up). It absorbs much of the energy of the storm water and is where many of the pollutants can start to filter out. The water then flows into the pond where pollutants continue to filter out before water is discharged.

Map 2: Old SWM Facility Possibility



This configuration was proposed several years ago. While any eventual SWM facility in the park may differ, this image demonstrates the approximate area needed for such a facility. The current pond is in the oval.

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| 1. Top of the proposed dam. | 3. Permanent pool limit | 5. Forebay |
| 2. Pond boundary | 4. Deeper ponds | 6. Cut in pipe. |

Placing an SWM facility into an existing park involves compromises. A forebay and pond will require much more space than the current pond. The CGCA is working with the City to find alternative park configurations that maintain the area as a park. Any configuration has to be technically viable from an SWM perspective and amenable to park use. The whole park area, ball fields included, is up for consideration. Any realistic alternative, however, will certainly impact the lower park, perhaps greatly. The fact of the College Gardens Elementary School reconstruction may add flexibility and funds to any overall solution.

Map 3: Alternative or Additional (Mitigating) Sites for SWM Facility



Areas within the ovals are alternative sites the CGCA and the City are considering for all or part of an overall SWM facility. The area in the rectangle is the location of the usual proposal.

Park features the CGCA seeks to maintain include: safety, overall appearance, existing trees and shade, a large gathering place for the National Night Out, a sledding area, an improved tot lot, and other park amenities such as improved teen facilities. The park survey, conducted by the City and the CGCA, will give you a chance to express your opinion. To arrive at a solution, the volleyball court and basketball courts may be moved. The softball field may be removed. The gazebo and the maintenance building may be replaced by one structure to save space.

Alternative sites that are being explored are shown in the ovals in map 3. These sites may or may not be viable due to technical or political reasons. It is not likely that either site would be able to replace all of an SWM facility in the lower part of the park but may reduce its size.

Notes: 1) Images were taken from the DPW presentation given on December 12, 2005 as captured from a PDF file supplied by the City. Annotations are by the CGCA. 2) I sent many questions to the City February 3. The questions and the responses will be on our website.