College Gardens Civic Association

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

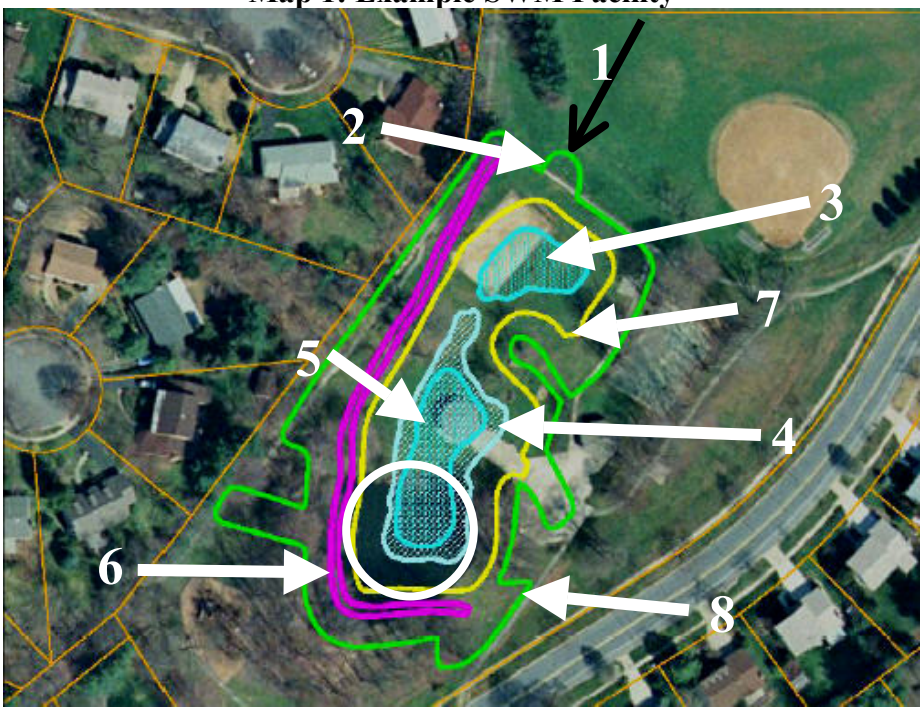
Storm Water Management Pond in College Gardens Park

May 26, 2006

Dear College Gardens Neighbor,

The College Gardens Civic Association (CGCA) has been working with the City since December concerning a stormwater management facility in our park (this is all completely documented on our website). On May 22, the CGCA met with City Staff, a consultant (Tim Schueler of Charles P. Johnson and Associates), and other interested parties to review all SWM options. At the meeting, Schueler did an outstanding job of discussing each possibility. The undeniable conclusion is that the only viable option for a SWM facility in the neighborhood is a pond in the lower part of College Gardens Park.

Map 1: Example SWM Facility



1. Stormwater pipe running under park
2. Outlet in pipe
3. Forebay
4. Larger pond limit
5. Deeper pond area
6. Dam
7. Spread of water for 1-year storm
8. Construction disturbance limit
The present park pond is in the circle.

Map 1 shows a possible SWM configuration very similar to one discussed in the May 22 meeting. During a storm, water will flow from a stormwater pipe (1) through an outlet (2) and into the forebay (3). The

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forebay will capture trash, pollutants, and sediment. Trash will be collected frequently while pollutants will become bound up and be held by the soil at the bottom of the forebay.

Stormwater will flow from the forebay to the larger pond (4) where it will be released over a 24-hour period. Between storms, the surface area of the larger pond will be about the same as now, that is, about 14,800 square feet. For a 1-year storm, the water level in the larger pond will typically rise about 2.8 feet and spread out to the line marked by arrow (7) on the map. Within 24 hours of the end of the storm, the pond will recede to its resting size. A spillway will handle overflow from very large storms.

The pond may be narrow and elongated to make it visually interesting; however, a rounder shape is possible. A public process will determine the final design. In order to handle the rise in water, the resting level of the pond will be 3 feet lower than now. A new dam (6) is proposed to be built inside the present dam in order to save its trees. It will be longer and higher than the present dam and be covered by grass. Many safety features are desired by residents and required by various permitting agencies. Safety features include land shelves within and near the pond so that no deep water is ever near the edge.

The appearance of the park will change. About 30 trees, mostly located between the current pond and College Parkway, will come down. The current dam leaks and it violates safety regulations because trees have grown on it. Even if no SWM pond were constructed in the park, it is possible that the current pond would have to be emptied at some point because of the state of the dam.

A SWM facility in the park will benefit the Watts Branch Stream, the Potomac River, the Chesapeake Bay, and the oceans. The proposed facility will control stormwater from up to 78 acres. It will meet almost 100% of the quantity goal and up to 50% of the quality control. It is, by far, the most cost effective of all possible solutions that were investigated.

The College Gardens Elementary School will be rebuilt starting this summer. By starting the SWM project now, there is greater flexibility in considering the overall use of both school and park property. The school can save several hundred thousand dollars while contributing to the pond project. The CGCA and City plan is to renovate the park in conjunction with the construction of the SWM facility.

The City and the neighborhood will work together to come up with the best design solutions for pond and park. This will include design meetings where the public can help formulate alternative pond and park configurations. There will be a chance for public input into final SWM pond and park design.

The CGCA has (over hundreds of hours) thoroughly investigated the SWM issue. Alternatives have been proposed, technically evaluated, fairly discussed, and dismissed for one reason or another. The CGCA sent many questions to City staff and received well-thought-out answers. There have been five long meetings (totaling 12 hours) including a walk-around the park and Forest Preserve. It is time to put this issue behind us as a neighborhood. I now fully and strongly support a SWM pond in the park.

The CGCA will hold its spring membership meeting on June 5, 7:00pm, in the College Gardens Elementary School all-purpose room. The SWM issue will be discussed at that meeting. A large attendance will signal the importance of the issue to the City and is needed to prevent small factions from controlling the agenda. I do hope you will attend.

Yours Sincerely,

Mark Pierzchala,
President, College Gardens Civic Association