

College Gardens Civic Association

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

April 23, 2007

College Gardens Civic Association Budget Testimony for Park and Pond

Mayor Giammo, and Honorable Council Members Hoffman, Dorsey, Robbins, and Marcuccio.

My name is Mark Pierzchala, President of the College Gardens Civic Association. I speak tonight in support of **full** funding for the College Gardens Storm Water Management Pond and the associated College Gardens Park Improvements. These are listed in the CIP budget as two projects. The SWM pond is listed as a Water Resources Project (330-850-2B59, page 101) and the College Gardens Park Improvements is listed as a Recreation and Parks Project (420-900-8B61, page 36). The new SWM pond would be in the middle of the College Gardens Park, replacing the current farm pond.

I cannot express to you enough that the neighborhood sees these two projects as one project. That is, park and pond together.

This SWM project would control stormwater from 78 acres, offering 100% quantity control and 60% quality control for those acres. It is my understanding that this project offers one of the best, if not the best, SWM control opportunities in the city in terms of benefit for cost. It would also cut the cost of the new CGES school construction by about \$800,000 because the SWM pond could be used for the quantity control part of their SWM obligation.

Yet the new SWM pond would require a re-sculpturing of the park terrain since the location, size, and shape of the current farm pond are not suitable for the job. The community has long been concerned about the impact of the SWM facility on the park. Because there was a perception that we would trade a park for a SWM pond, this was a controversial issue in the community for some time.

The park is at the heart of the community and serves the College Gardens single-family homes, Yale Village, Scarborough Square and Plymouth Woods, and is adjacent to the elementary school. It is the location of our tremendously successful National Night Out and is frequently used for recreation including the tot lot, the basketball courts, and the sand volleyball court. The current park and pond are very attractive. You often see people around the pond enjoying its beauty. The community is especially concerned about maintaining its beauty, including as many large trees as possible, and maintaining the function of the space as a park.

When the Department of Public Works presented to Mayor and Council in December 2005, reintroducing the implementation of the College Gardens SWM pond, it was necessary to form a College Gardens Task Force to address, and to reconcile, all points of view in the community. It

<i>President</i> Mark Pierzchala 816 Fordham Street Rockville, MD 20850 (301) 838-7687 markpierzchala@cs.com	<i>Vice President</i> Mike Phillips 1616 Auburn Avenue Rockville, MD 20850 (301) 340-8822 nomusicnolife@earthlink.net	<i>Secretary</i> Dolores Wallace 7 Duke Court Rockville, MD 20850 (301) 424-4584 drwallace1@comcast.net	<i>Treasurer</i> Susan Van Grack 808 Fordham Street Rockville, MD 20850 (301) 279-2266 SVANGRACK@writ.com
--	---	--	--

was also necessary to revisit some of the technical findings of the Watts Branch Watershed Study so that the final recommendations of the Task Force would be seen as technically sound.

The Task Force had members from the neighborhood, City Staff, Plymouth Woods, the Environment Commission, the Recreation and Park Advisory Board, and observers from the community. There were many meetings, three community presentations, two surveys, a CGCA membership vote, several newsletters, and other ways for people to give input. The CGCA website documents all important events since December 2005. There are currently 33 documents on our website (www.collegegardens.org) about these two projects.

City Staff with the pond and park contractors (Tim Schueler of Charles P. Johnson and Associates and John Slater of Slater and Associates) demonstrated that they took seriously the community input and together came up with a tremendous design. With this dual design, there is no issue of any tradeoff. We can have both the SWM pond and a better park.

The community has now expressed its resounding support and is looking forward to the completion of the full project. The pond and park will be a showcase for years to come. For these reasons, I urge you to fully fund both CIP projects.

Yours Sincerely,

Mark Pierzchala
President, College Gardens Civic Association