

To the County Council of Montgomery County
April 4, 2021

City Council Budget Hearing – Montgomery County Parks

The continued funding for the Montgomery County parks is important because the funds support a democratic institution open to everyone in Montgomery County. During this time in our country's history when differences between people have become so dominant in the news – a counter point is to experience the outdoors in safe public parks with families of all walks of life and nationalities with their young children. Also during these times of “lock down” it is well established that being outdoors reduces stress and increases a sense of well being and improves mental health. People are entering their familiar parks and are finding new green spaces where they could safely be outside and experience the facilities provided by the parks.

Personally my family and friends enter the parks for a welcome relief from traffic and congestion and seek the relaxation to bike ride or walk that the parks provide. We live in the southern part of the county and the provision of ‘open parkways’ has been a great benefit during the pandemic for the extra open space provided for serious exercise. I have noticed that the children's parks and play equipment have been well maintained and used by families eager to have their children enjoy play and enjoy outdoors. My family and I have personally enjoyed finding new park spaces and facilities and activities that were unknown to us. We have observed the facilities for boating at Black Hills Regional Park, extensive trails at Rachel Carson Conservation, and have now explored full perimeter of the Agricultural History Farm Park.

I have worked as a volunteer for the Parks Archaeology Program for close to three decades. I have been able to participate in projects there and as a Professor of Anthropology at Montgomery College encouraged the participation of students in park projects and activities. The outdoor hands-on learning experiences available to people of the county was valued by all the students not only for their exposure to archaeology but also to the parks where archaeological sites are located.

It is necessary to fund the parks to continue the programs that are necessary for the stewardship of the parks resources, cultural and archaeological, and for the health and well-being of the county residents.

Sincerely,

Eugenia J. Robinson PhD