

My name is Eva Santorini. My husband and I have lived in the Rosemary Hills section of Silver Spring since 1988. I would like to thank you for this opportunity to offer public testimony on a subject that continues to be near and dear to my heart: our beautiful Montgomery County parks.

I support the full funding of the park.

We live around the corner from Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Park which had been popular and loved for its open green space long before we recognized its benefit during the COVID pandemic. It was then that we recognized the value of being able to enjoy Nature, get relief from isolation, and see neighbors, even if only from a safe distance.

During the recent “refresh” of that park, I was involved in highlighting the need for long-ignored maintenance issues, such as its soccer and athletic fields and tree care; considering cost-effective amenities to benefit all visitors; advocating for the valuable open space; and insisting that feedback included nearby apartment building residents.

Our small group of concerned neighbors was very grateful when most, if not all, of the issues were addressed at the December 2023 meeting at the Coffield Community Center. I appreciate the behind-the-scenes work by our District 18 team, headed by State Senator, Jared Solomon, and others who were responsible for identifying funds and who followed progress on the issues raised. Most importantly, the park will serve all residents as greater density is expected from housing construction adjacent to the future Lyttonsville station of the Purple Line.

I offered testimony last fall for the Lyttonsville Civic Green, whose design was developed with great sensitivity by Parks designer Ching-Fang Chen with our community's input. I relayed my excitement for the transformation of that tiny parcel of land from a construction staging area for the Purple Line to a park in which local history is revealed and celebrated. Girders from the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge will be placed in the park and remind visitors that bridges that once divided communities now unite them. Those traveling on the adjacent Capitol Crescent Trail – whose mature trees were decimated in preparation for Purple Line construction - whether on foot or on bicycle, will be able to rest in the green space and learn a little of its history. What a fitting location the Lyttonsville Civic Green will be for the annual Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk, in its 6<sup>th</sup> year in 2023, where participants can begin and end their Unity Walk.

I would like to show you the Unity Lantern that was positioned on the center of the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge during its centennial birthday celebration in 2018 and has been lit for all subsequent Lantern Walks. The photograph by Rosemary Hills resident Jay Mallin, captures the moment in which representatives of Lyttonsville, North Woodside, and Rosemary Hills join to light the lantern.

In closing I would like to thank you for this opportunity and all those who are speaking up in support of the full funding of our beautiful and cherished Montgomery County parks.

