

Dear councilmembers,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed conversion of the NPCC soccer field from turf to natural grass. While a good grass field is more enjoyable and safer to play on than turf, it requires steady and meticulous maintenance to stay in good condition. Unfortunately, the county does not have decent track record maintaining grass fields. As a regular participant in Montgomery County recreational soccer leagues I can attest that the quality of county grass soccer fields is generally rather poor. E.g., the “grass” fields at the Laytonia recreational park are grass in name only. Essentially, they are packed clay, with very sparse blades of grass not providing much cushion (and the goalie area is a solid clay pit without any grass at all, which is not only unpleasant but also risky). If the county has money to spend on improving field conditions for soccer enthusiasts (which would be very welcome and highly appreciated!), it would be much better spent on rehabilitating and maintaining the existing grass fields rather than converting a functional turf field (or which there are few) into another inferior grass field (of which there are plenty).

In addition, grass fields are much more susceptible to the elements. They have to be closed for rain, and they are shut down for the colder months in a big chunk of the year. As a senior and a recent retiree, I have been relishing the opportunity to play soccer at NPCC twice a week with people my age, and I am very grateful to the county for providing that opportunity. I would be very disappointed to see that opportunity curtailed dramatically – first completely during the construction/conversion field, and then due to seasonality and weather-dependence.

Respectfully,

Vladimir Klyuev