

MADAM CHAIR, MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY TONIGHT.

I'M DAVE MODI, AND I'M A 40-YEAR RESIDENT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY. I CURRENTLY LIVE IN DERWOOD.

I'M SPEAKING TONIGHT ON BEHALF OF MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE WHO PLAY SENIOR SOCCER THROUGH THE COUNTY'S RECREATION DEPARTMENT. THESE 100+ PEOPLE COME FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE COUNTY, ARE A NICE MIX OF WOMEN AND MEN, AND REPRESENT AT LAST COUNT OVER 20 DIFFERENT CULTURES, REFLECTING THE DIVERSITY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY WHICH MAKES IT SUCH A RICH PLACE TO LIVE.

WE COME TODAY TO STRONGLY OPPOSE THE PROPOSAL IN THE BUDGET TO CONVERT THE TURF FIELD AT THE NORTH POTOMAC COMMUNITY CENTER (NPCC) TO NATURAL GRASS. WE BELIEVE THE PROPOSAL WOULD SERIOUSLY CURTAIL OUR OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY WHAT IS KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD AS THE "BEAUTIFUL GAME".

A TURF CAN BE USED FOR PLAY 12 MONTHS OF THE YEAR. THE ONLY TIME IT IS UNAVAILABLE IS SITUATIONS LIKE NOW, WHEN IT IS COVERED IN SNOW AND ICE, AND WHEN THERE'S THUNDER OR LIGHTNING. OTHERWISE, IT'S PLAYABLE.

WE PLAYED IN THE HEAT OF LAST SUMMER, WE'VE PLAYED IN DRIVING RAINSTORMS, AND UNTIL THE SNOW CAME TWO WEEKS AGO, WE WERE PLAYING SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK IN THE DEAD OF WINTER. WE SIMPLY BUNDLE UP AND START RUNNING.

ONE DAY BEFORE THE SNOW WE HAD 41 PEOPLE SHOW UP TO PLAY. THAT'S ALMOST ENOUGH FOR FOUR FULL TEAMS. MOST DAYS WE GET A MINIMUM OF 25-30.

IF THE FIELD WERE CONVERTED TO GRASS, WE WOULD BE PRECLUDED FROM PLAYING ON IT FROM DECEMBER THROUGH MARCH. THAT WOULD FORCE US TO SEEK INDOOR SPACE TO CONTINUE PLAYING IN THE WINTER, AND WITH THE COMPETITION FOR

INDOOR SPACE AT A PREMIUM – WHAT WITH KIDS’ SPORTS AND OTHER ADULT SPORTS – WE WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE DENIED A CHANCE TO PLAY.

AND EVEN IF WE COULD FIND AVAILABLE SPACE, TRYING TO ACCOMMODATE 25 OR 30 PEOPLE, LET ALONE 40, WOULD BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.

IN ADDITION, A GRASS FIELD WOULD LIKELY BE CLOSED DURING AND AFTER RAIN STORMS, EVEN IF THERE WERE NO THUNDER OR LIGHTNING. THOSE GAMES WE PLAYED IN LIGHT RAIN AND IN DRIVING RAIN WOULD BE ABOLISHED.

OPTIMALLY, EVERY SO OFTEN A GRASS FIELD WOULD NEED TO BE TAKEN OUT OF COMMISSION FOR SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR TO ALLOW IT TO “REST”. DURING THAT REST PERIOD, WE WOULD BE DENIED THE CHANCE TO PLAY.

FINALLY, IF A GRASS FIELD IS NOT REGULARLY MAINTAINED, THE GRASS BECOMES THREDBARE, THE FIELD CAN TURN MUDDY, AND RAIN RUN-OFF CAN CAUSE MINOR “DITCHES” TO APPEAR IN THE DIRT. IF THESE DITCHES GET BIG ENOUGH, THEY CAN WREAK HAVOC ON OUR KNEES, ANKLES AND HIPS.

FOR ALL THESE REASONS, WE SENIORS URGE THE COUNCIL TO KEEP THE FIELD AT THE NPCC AS IT IS, IN TURF. PLEASE ALLOW US TO CONTINUE PLAYING THE MOST POPULAR GAME IN THE WORLD, ALL YEAR ROUND.

THANK YOU.