

To my Montgomery County Council Members:

I am writing to whole heartedly support for full funding for the Parks.

As a resident of downtown Silver Spring, my family and I have enjoyed the SSI Park for over 40 years. My son (now 35 years old and living in rural Washington County, tells me often how important the SSI Park was for him. Our house is on a very small plot and he (and his sister) spent countless hours at "The Park". Making and meeting friends, imagination pizza delivery games, soccer practice, basketball, softball, as well as just enjoying the grass, sun, etc. Still to this day, there are so very many individuals in our neighborhood who rely on this park - I've seen the foosball court in constant use, same with basketball and tennis and pickleball. Soccer practice, Jewish neighbor praying with his son, immigrant playing a wooden flute evening after evening, families arriving after supper and back as night falls, I could go on and on.

There is a cost though. \$\$\$ to pay for the maintenance. Where could costs be cut? Surely not for maintaining the trees, no one should be in peril.

Also I have enjoyed the Fenton Community Garden. This will be my 4th year there. It's an avid community made richer through the efforts of the Parks staff, who mediate conflict, maintain the mulch and compost supplies, and deal with the many other tasks, such as inspections. Without their efforts, this garden could be a rat infested vista of overgrown weeds (which I know that gardens without rules and 'enforcement" have become in other situations). Finally I am thrilled to remind you that much of what is grown is donated to those in need, during our monthly harvest, resulting in fresh produce being in the hands of the new consumers within 2 hours. I personally delivered several huge heads of cabbage to Shepherd's Table, right before this winter's severe cold.

Thank you for listening and please, remember: that these spaces benefit the community and county as a whole. As do all the Parks staff that I have been in contact with.

Ann Lafferty