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Dear Board of Education Members,

As a civic activist and environmentalist, I am disappointed in the hurried process, the lack of transparency, and the very concept put forth for the 20-acre MCPS site on Potomac's Brickyard Road.

I question the wisdom of kicking off a nationally-recognized organic farmer while the County is simultaneously expending so much time and effort to energize local/organic agriculture, farmers' markets, young farmers, environmental stewardship, Chesapeake Bay relief, water-quality protection, etc. The particularities of this site for growing seed free from GMO contamination make it unique within the County to my knowledge. In addition, there appears to be significant disagreement over the need for these proposed ball fields, based on their location and accessibility to the rest of the county. Where was the public in the discussion on these issues?

We are told there would be no artificial turf, no lighting at night. That is helpful. But what about when the next County Executive & Council roll in and get pressured? As we know too well, once a new use is established, the tendency is for growth. What would prevent this predictable course of events?

For the immediate neighbors the core issues are noise, lights, traffic, trash, commotion, loud whistles, etc. My concerns include those impacts but more central still is the need for transparency in the underlying decision to fundamentally change the use of this land and to walk away from a farmer serving his community with fresh, local, healthy produce and seed.

Enthusiasm for all things local and organic is exploding. By way of example a Potomac Village store is selling an organic lettuce mix from Poolesville at \$7.99 per 11 oz. clamshell. Say what you will about personal choices, but this product is prominently advertised as local and organic, and it is selling out. More broadly, our seasonal farmers' markets and local growers are outstripped by the rising demand from families and restaurants for local and/or organic produce.

The time for public input is now. We ask for reasonable notice and hearing, so that your decision will be better informed and therefore better serve the public. At a minimum, this decision should be put off to allow further discussion.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway, President

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