

Statement of Nick Maravell before the Montgomery County Board of Education on the Proposed Lease of the Brickyard Road School site, March 8, 2011

I am Nick Maravell and my home borders on the Brickyard school site. I have leased the site from the Montgomery County schools for about 30 years. Traditionally in this County, farmers have been the stewards of these vacant sites with the understanding that they could be reclaimed by the school system at any time for school construction.

While this site is not slated for school construction, I have been informed just a few days ago that I would not be able to renew my lease. So the tradition has been broken.

A new land use is proposed, and not surprisingly the surrounding community has taken an interest. It expects to be informed and consulted, as has been customary in this County. And I would be hard pressed to make the case this process had been undertaken. So the tradition has been broken.

You hold this land in trust for our citizens. You are not to be unduly influenced by private interests or funds, least that fiduciary responsibility be compromised. Right now the County and the schools are under severe budgetary restraint. The temptation to place dollars over the public interest can be debated in many ways, but the debate must take place, with you the trustees—not the County. If it does not, and I submit that it has not, then the trust with the community is broken.

The community interest you see here is an effort to re-kindle that trust. I urge you to take up the challenge. Do not vote to lease this school site to the County with an almost certain outcome assured. Pause. Have a complete and open discussion with the community. How could this hurt the public interest? If you do not value a discussion, then not only are our traditions broken, and our community trust broken, but, indeed, we have lost the very human basis for reconstructing them.