

Testimony by Lisa Schnoor
before the Montgomery County School Board

Rockville, MD

March 8, 2011

Good Morning Board Members. My name is Lisa Schnoor. I was born and raised in Montgomery County and currently live in District 5. I'm speaking on behalf of Nick's Organic Farm and in opposition to the construction of ball fields on Brickyard Road.

There are many reasons for this, and I will share two of them:

First, the Board of Education may not be aware what a magnificent treasure the soil on Nick's farm is. Good soil is like gold! The Agricultural Research center in Beltsville has even commented on the quality of Nick's soil. You may not realize how much time it takes to build healthy soil. One farmer told me it took him 10 years to restore the soil fertility on land that previously had pesticides. Nick's soil is rich, fertile soil. The richer the soil is, the more nutritious the crops, the larger the harvest, and the more pest and drought resistant.

Have you considered what we would be destroying if we turn this land, this soil, into ball fields? It has taken 31 years to build soil of this quality. You can't just replicate that by relocating a farm.

A ball field, on the other hand, can be built on most any land. Does it make sense – out of all the places to put a ball field – to put it on some of the best farming soil in the county?

Suppose, in the future, a school is built on this land – as was the original intent. The students could have a school garden ready-made with rich, fertile soil! What a gift to those students and to the county!

Secondly, the fact that Nick is growing non-genetically-modified corn and soy in an area isolated from the pollen of GM-versions is another reason to preserve this farm. I do not have time to speak about this, but it is quite rare, something to be protected, and should be a point of pride for our county.

We would be foolish to trash this agricultural resource, and I believe we'll look back only with regret if we choose to do so.

I ask you to please renew Nick Maravell's lease. Thank you.

