

July 22, 2011

Editor
The Olney Gazette

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL TO: letters@gazette.net

Dear Olney Gazette/Olney Community:

For the record, the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) is on record as opposing the busing of Farquhar students to the Tilden Holding School in Rockville. Our delegates feel it is not in the students' best interest.

We have not endorsed any of the remaining options being considered by the Montgomery County Public Schools in their recently published ***Modernization Feasibility Study Draft for the Farquhar Middle School***. We are quite concerned about this process and how the voices of an ENTIRE community have not been heard.

Although we recognize that a Master Plan does not have the effect of law, we have always been staunch defenders of the Olney Master Plan; many of our officers and delegates were instrumental in developing the language of the current (2005) revision. The Olney community has relied on what the Master Plan says and the need to adhere to this plan to promote orderly development and maintain an overall vision of what Olney should be.

The ***Feasibility Study*** is endorsing a "land swap" option with a 17.2 acre property, formerly part of the Casey Property, adjacent to Farquhar Middle School that is designated to become a local park. While this may seem a simple solution on the surface it opens a myriad of concerns.

For the record, GOCA cannot endorse this proposed land swap until it is 100% clear that this option is best for the entire Olney community. We feel this swap would be a clear violation of the language and intent of the Olney Master Plan. Many Olney communities, and GOCA members, have children that attend Rosa Parks Middle School and Redland Middle School. We are very concerned that MCPS has not listened to our whole community but only a handful of Olney residents. We have sent letters to MCPS Superintendent Dr. Joshua Starr and BOE President Christopher Barclay outlining our concerns and encouraging them to consider other options.

We clearly understand the need for a modernization of Farquhar Middle School and support it. We are simply asking that all voices in our community be heard, all reasonable options be considered, and the Olney Master Plan be respected and adhered to.

Sincerely Yours,

Matt Zaborsky

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