

November 30, 2016

Dear Councilmember Cheh,

We're writing on behalf of the Friends at Hearst Pool... We would like to object to the letter sent to you and your Council colleagues (attached), dated November 28th, by Nick Netchvolodoff, in which he appears to place the full weight of the Cleveland Park Historical Society behind a rejection of the Hearst Park site for a Ward 3 outdoor pool.

While we very much appreciate the volunteer work that Mr. Netchvolodoff and his colleagues do on the board, in this instance we believe he has overreached and does not speak either for the majority opinion of the neighborhood, or even perhaps for the majority of the members of his own organization.

We take issue with the following items and assert...

1) Representation: *Mr. Netchvolodoff's opinions do not represent the majority of Cleveland Park residents.*

Mr. Netchvoloff, who lives nearly across the street from the park, claims, or at best insinuates, in this instance, and on this issue, to represent "*the Cleveland Park neighborhood of 1100 households*". Yet, there is no indication on what basis he purports to make that claim regarding this issue. On the contrary, nearly every Cleveland Park family with whom we and our members have spoken - and there are many (at the schools our children attend, John Eaton and Hearst; on our blocks; or in Hearst Park itself, among other neighborhood spots) - nearly every family has been wholeheartedly in support of a walkably-located, architecturally-suitable public pool at the Hearst location. To be clear, Mr. Netchvolodoff simply does not speak for the neighborhood itself, nor for the nearly 280 neighbors of the park that have signed a petition specifically supporting a pool at this location. (<https://www.change.org/p/jackie-stanley-dc-dgs-yes-to-a-pool-at-hearst-park>)

2) Flooding and Drainage Concerns: *Mr. Netchvolodoff's letter misrepresents key aspects of the proposed pool project.*

Mr. Netchvoloff writes: "*In our opinion, the proposed new construction would exacerbate flooding problems at the Park.*"

Again, it's not clear on what basis Mr. Netchvolodoff makes this claim. This assertion completely ignores Option 1 proposed by the city (and favored by our organization), to place the pool on the existing elevated tennis court platform.

<http://dgs.dc.gov/page/hearst-park-and-pool-improvement-project>

None of the drainage issues on the more northern part of the playing field would be impacted in any way by a pool at this tennis court location. In fact, the assumption would be that a pool platform would have rigorously managed water flow - it's a pool after all, and new construction - so, more so than the existing decades-old tennis court, water and drainage here would presumably be better tied to sewer lines, and therefore more directly managed.

And really, the same rationale could be applied to Options 2 and 3 as well: namely that new construction would present an excellent opportunity to better manage water flow in any area that needs it.

3) Tree Impact: *Mr. Netchvoloff's letter misrepresents what is clearly laid out in the City's three proposed options.*

Mr. Netchvoloff writes: "*In our opinion, the proposed new construction... would potentially damage many of the Park's heritage willow oaks. These trees are among the Park's most valued features.*"

Once more, it's unclear on what he is basing this assertion. All three proposals make clear that tree preservation is a priority. All the large willow oaks are clearly shown on the drawings: And in the last community meeting, the architects and site planners clearly stated that saving the trees was a priority. Losing the big trees would be the last thing that Friends of Hearst Pool would wish to happen. But to put it succinctly, that is just not an issue in this case - all parties agree that the large trees will need to stay.

4) Jurisdiction: *Hearst Park is not in the Cleveland Park Historic District.*

Again, while we sincerely appreciate Mr. Netchvoloff's volunteer work with CPHS, in this case, the proposed location of Hearst Park is not even in the Cleveland Park Historic District boundaries, so it's unclear to us at FOHP whether he has jurisdiction to speak on this matter on behalf of his organization.

<http://www.clevelandparkhistoricalsociety.org/historic-district/>

In short, Mr. Netchvolodoff urges you to reconsider the Hearst Park location; we the families of Cleveland Park, including the nearly 280 folks who have signed a petition specifically supporting a pool at Hearst, desiring a walkably-accessible recreational resource for children and adult alike, urge you do the opposite and stick to the plan as it is currently proposed, and build a pool at Hearst Park.

Yours sincerely,

Friends of Hearst Pool

CC:

Council Chairman Phil Mendelson

Councilmember Anita Bonds

Councilmember David Grosso

Councilmember Alicia Silverman

Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

Keith Anderson, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

Greer Gillis, Director, Department of General Services