



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

January 15, 2008

Ms. Tara M. Flynn  
Co-Chair, GPNS - Save our School Task Force  
c/o Garrett Park Nursery School  
PO Box 314  
Garrett Park, MD 20896

Dear Ms Flynn:

Thank you very much for participating in the various meetings with park staff concerning the Garrett Park Recreation Building (now referred to as a park activity building).

I know you are very concerned about the continued use of the building by the Garrett Park Nursery School. My staff has recommended that the nursery school be allowed to continue operations until June 2010, absent any finding of a major structural flaw in the building or any finding of a structural defect that poses an imminent life safety issue. I hope this timeframe meets your needs in terms of seeking new enrollees at the nursery school.

The date of June 2010 is based on the anticipated date of construction of the new Garrett Park Estates Elementary School. The effect of this construction on the park activity building and the safety of its users will have to be reevaluated at that time. Any decisions about the future of the Garrett Park Activity Building in relation to the construction of the elementary school will be addressed when the Planning Board reviews the mandatory referral for the Garrett Park Elementary School.

As you know, we plan to complete a structural assessment of the Garrett Park Activity Building the last week in March when the Garrett Park Elementary School and the Cooperative Nursery are on Spring Break. An earlier date might have been preferable, but we are concerned about the safety of the students during the testing. Heavy equipment will be driven in and out and staged within the site. Scheduling the testing during spring break eliminates the potential for conflicts with school buses and private vehicles. In addition, since some of the testing is on outside walls, spring break allows a week to perform the work and provides for a longer window of opportunity if there happens to be bad weather.

This testing will require the nursery school to pack up all furniture and store all supplies as is the current practice for the summer break. The testing is expected to produce at a minimum dust and dirt. Mark Wallis will be contacting you with more specifics of the schedule and the work to be done.

Over the past several months, staff has met with many community groups who, like you, are concerned about the future of park recreation buildings/activity centers. Based on those meetings, we are amending the planning process for recreation buildings/activity centers. One of the most important changes is to add a "Community Value" component to the "Building Decision Matrix" along with "Use" and "Total Cost of Ownership." Communities like Garrett Park feel very strongly that park activity buildings are part of the community fabric. Many of

these buildings have been historically important to their neighborhoods. Our evaluation process needs to include this factor.

Staff is now preparing a revised planning approach for review by the community in March. As a result, we would like to cancel the community meeting originally anticipated in February. As soon as the revised approach is drafted and I have had the opportunity to review and approve it, we will share it with you and post it on the web.

Finally, thank you very much for your efforts to foster better communication with our staff and your willingness to work to identify solutions. I know Mark Wallis and Lyn Coleman will be in touch with you to discuss any parts of this letter in more detail.

Sincerely,



Mary R. Bradford  
Director of Parks

MRB:LC

cc: Brian Woodward, Chief, Southern Region  
Al Astorga, Chief, Central Maintenance  
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks  
John Boyd, Park Manager, Meadowbrook  
Dr. John E. Hench, Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship  
Carolyn Shawaker, Mayor, Town of Garrett Park  
Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council  
Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council  
Kate Stookey, Manager, Park Information and Customer Service  
Deborah Szyfer, Montgomery County Public Schools