

Testimony of Robert J. Gross
President, Montgomery Square Citizens Association
"A Community Full of Enthusiasm and Pride"

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: PUBLIC HEARING on November 23, 2010 - Resolution to approve sale of Peary High School

Dear Honorable Councilmembers:

I am President of the Montgomery Square Citizens Association. Montgomery Square is a community of over 400 families in Potomac, Maryland. Our community lies between Seven Locks Road and Falls Road, straddling Montrose Road.

I testify to express our support for the purchase of the old Peary High School property by the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy (MJBHA). This is of great import because over 70 families from the Montgomery Square and nearby neighborhoods have children now attending MJBHA, with countless other alumnae and parents in our community. But the issue is of great significance to the county as well. Through its investment in restoring the Peary property and continued dedication to providing recreational access and meeting space in the Aspen Hill area, the school has provided a valuable benefit to Montgomery County. The Academy has become an integral part of our community's academic and social culture; not only in the Aspen Hill community, but for so many families across the county.


MJBHA's exercise of its option to purchase has long had the support of the Aspen Hill Civic Association as well as that of the Kemp Mill Civic Association. We join them, the Washington Post, County Executive Ike Leggett, Councilmember Roger Berliner, who represents our District, as well as the many Maryland State delegates (including the entire District 19 delegation) in that support.

Although not required by the original lease, MJBHA has agreed that 1) the property will only be used as a school and 2) should the property be needed in the future as a public school, the County can reclaim it for a price that simply is intended to ensure that MJBHA recovers its investment (purchase price and improvements). MJBHA has been an anchor in helping to revitalize the Aspen Hill community.

The school has been a good neighbor and made itself available for public use. MJBHA will continue to maintain the property and athletic fields, which are used regularly by neighborhood residents free of charge, in good condition and at no cost to the county.

On behalf of Montgomery Square, I urge the members of the Council to approve the sale of the old Peary property to the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert J. Gross
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