

From: palmscience <palmscience@verizon.net>
To: Main, Lori J. <Lori.Main@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: Roshdieh, Al <Al.Roshdieh@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Cupples, Tim <Tim.Cupples@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Jeffrey, Heather <Heather.Jeffrey@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Spielberg, Debbie <Debbie.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Kingsley, Frank <Frank.Kingsley@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Holley, Geary <Geary.Holley@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Berrios, Juan A. <Juan.Berrios@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Edward Rich <ejrich56@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2019, 11:37:33 AM EDT
Subject: Re: Old Farm Sidewalk Proposal - Response to Petition

Lori,

Many residents have asked that DOT explore alternatives to cutting cherry trees for sidewalks in their e-mails to you. But, because of the balkanized nature of DOT, with sidewalks separate from traffic calming, the DOT has failed to take a holistic look in consultation with the broader community, on traffic issues.

It took over 2 decades of advocacy from numerous neighbors, including myself, Ed Rich, Karen Opdahl and others just to get additional stop signs at the crosswalk to the school!? Two years ago when Mark Terry was in the traffic calming section of DOT, he told me that "stop signs are dangerous," and based on his traffic study "we didn't have a traffic problem."

I continue to encourage you and your colleagues to work together across the stovepipes of DOT and to engage in a constructive way with our community and the Greater Farmland Community Association to explore alternatives to cutting our cherry blossom trees for sidewalks.

Sincerely,
Anna Palmisano

On 7/24/2019 9:37 AM, Main, Lori J. wrote:

Good morning Dr. Palmisano,

I am sorry our response to the petition was in any way upsetting to you; that was not its purpose. The petition and all of its signatures are, indeed,

posted on the record, and I look forward to meeting the residents at the hearing, if one is scheduled.

The County does care about the environment, including its trees. However, when a question of safety, especially in and surrounding an elementary school, is brought to light via a sidewalk request and repeated and escalated inquiry from within the community, the Annual Sidewalk Program has a duty to investigate and propose the requested safety measures. We do not live in your community, though, and that is why the Program is set up with so many opportunities for the residents to voice their opinions and concerns.

I typically schedule the hearings at least a month out, sending notification to the residents at that time. Additionally, I have the hearing posted on the MCDOT calendar, advertised in the Washington Post on two separate occasions prior to the hearing, and the hearing is, likewise, the topic of a Montgomery County government press release. I will, additionally, email any hearing notice to you and to Mr. Rich with the Greater Farmland Civic Association for added insurance that the residents are well informed.

Thank you again for all of your hard work on behalf of your community. I hope this finds you well and enjoying this beautiful day and our cooler temperatures. If you have any additional thoughts or questions, please feel free to contact me.

Best,

Lori

Lori Jean Main

Consultant

Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Planning & Design

100 Edison Park Drive

4th Floor

Gaithersburg, Maryland? 20878

lori.main@montgomerycountymd.gov

240-777-7271

From: palmscience <palmscience@verizon.net>

Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2019 3:44 PM

To: Main, Lori J. <Lori.Main@montgomerycountymd.gov>

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Subject: Re: Old Farm Sidewalk Proposal - Response to Petition

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Lori,

Thank you for taking time to ensure me that all 135 signatures (combined written and online) will be considered in your process. I know that you have also received many individual e-mails from neighbors protesting your proposal to destroy our trees. Many in our community are indeed very angry and upset at the prospect of losing our beloved Yoshino cherries. The Okame trees bear little resemblance to the Yoshinos. Okames are a different color and bloom at a different time in the Spring. So, whether you plant one or three, you will entirely change the character of our neighborhood by destroying our Yoshinos.

I have to admit, I find it ironic that the County claims to value trees with its My Green Montgomery, yet proposes to cut down 35 mature cherry trees that currently provide environmental, climate, social and aesthetic services to our neighborhood.

I hope that the community will receive ample warning of when the hearing is scheduled. We will be coming out in full force to protect our neighborhood from this misguided County proposal.

Sincerely,

Anna Palmisano, Ph.D.

11905 Hitching Post Lane

On 7/23/2019 2:32 PM, Main, Lori J. wrote:

Hello Dr. Palmisano,

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the Save the Trees Petition, opposing the sidewalk proposal in your community. Your dedication to the trees is clear from all of your hard work and effort putting the petition together. Montgomery County, likewise, is dedicated to improving environment, holding a special reverence to the benefit of trees. I would like to direct your attention to the My Green Montgomery website

at <https://mygreenmontgomery.org/>. Additionally, the County has a free shade tree program, promoting the benefits of tall, shade trees and their upkeep. You may peruse this site at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/trees/tree-montgomery.html>. Even the Annual Sidewalk Program promotes trees and their benefit to the environment by planting three trees for every one tree removed.

As you may know, Montgomery County's Annual Sidewalk Program follows a process of community involvement, stretched over several months to a year before the Director makes any final decisions on its proposals. The program is set up this way so that all residents not only have a voice, but also have the opportunity to ask questions, meet with members of our staff, and attend the public hearing, an open forum offering residents the opportunity to testify for or against the proposal to a Public Hearing Officer. The public hearing is then followed by a second, supplemental comment period, offering residents the opportunity to further comment after having heard the testimony of their neighbors. Currently, the proposal for Old Farm is in the first stage of the program's process: the initial comment period. It is very early on in our process and the trees are in no current danger. Because so many travel during the summer months, we have extended the initial comment period through August 9. Upon completion of this comment period, staff members will meet to discuss whether or not the proposal will proceed to public hearing. Even then, and if the full proposal does go to public hearing, the trees are not yet in danger of removal. It is only following the final comment period, after the public hearing, that a decision will be made one way or another. If it is decided that hazardous conditions exist for pedestrians in Old Farm and the sidewalk is approved, again, the community will receive three trees to every one tree removed. I note that the Okame Cherry Tree is on the minor trees list from which the County's Arborist selects the replants. I have attached a picture of the Okame Cherry Tree to this email for your reference. A hybrid of multiple Asian Cherry Trees, the Okame offers more strength, durability and longevity than the Yoshino cherry tree, yet is every bit as beautiful.

I can imagine the alarm with which many Old Farm residents opened the sidewalk proposal. The cherry trees are beautiful and iconic to the neighborhood; as would the Okame cherry trees be, especially in triplicate. Regardless, however, we are in the first stage of a lengthy process through which every sidewalk proposal must go. There are ample

opportunities throughout this process to quash a proposal, be it following this initial comment phase or the public hearing. Even then, there is still time to quash the proposal via the final comment period. You have made very clear what many residents feel towards sidewalk installation. The petition will be placed on the record, each and every signature a vote against the sidewalk proposal. I appreciate the kind patience and understanding of the residents as the proposal goes through its process, and I will ensure that the residents are kept updated on decisions as they are made.

Thank you again for hard work and dedication to your neighborhood. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Lori

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