

December 8, 2004

The Honorable Douglas Duncan
Members of the Montgomery County Council
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Duncan and Council Members:

The *Friends of Sligo Creek* is concerned about a pending development project that could harm the creek. We strongly encourage the County Government to take necessary steps to ensure that any development at the wooded site adjacent to Kermit Road in the Woodside Hills area of Silver Spring is done in a manner that will minimize degradation to the Sligo Creek watershed.

The *Friends of Sligo Creek* is a volunteer organization that looks after the creek. Since it was organized in January of 2000, membership has grown. Events have drawn up to 350 people and we have an electronic mailing list of over 500. *Friends* has been very active in hosting events that enhance the natural aspects of the park, educate the community, or appreciate the park. We regularly work with the State and Counties as well as other volunteer organizations to further our mission "to restore the health and water quality, natural habitat, and ecological well-being of the Sligo Creek watershed by bringing neighbors together to build awareness, improve natural habitat, and protect our community's heritage." *Friends* has been commended for its efforts by Montgomery County government officials.

The park is located in Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties and consists of approximately 7000 acres of public land associated with the watershed. The main stream is about eight miles long and feeds into the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. Consequently, Sligo Creek is part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It is a heavily used park and, although much degraded from its natural condition, through the efforts of the State of Maryland, county and regional government agencies, as well as volunteers, the watershed is rebounding. Improvements have been made in stream quality, tree cover, removal of fish barriers, and in re-establishing native fish species.

Sligo Creek is one of the most urbanized subwatersheds within the Maryland portion of the Anacostia watershed. Less than 15% of the total subwatershed area remains undeveloped, and only 10% of the subwatershed is in forest cover. The majority of the

stream is bordered by a narrow buffer of parkland owned and maintained by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

The Woodside Hills area is already burdened with storm water problems. There is basement flooding, and pooling of water on road surfaces after rain, which is especially hazardous during winter freezes. Additional development, unless handled very well is likely to make matters worse. The applications for a storm water management concept plan submitted to date by the developer for the Kermit Road site do not solve the problem of additional storm water discharge into Sligo Creek.

The one acre site is currently one of the last forested and undeveloped buffers between dense commercial development along Georgia Avenue and a residential area. As it exists, this forested section of Woodside Hills is a natural retention area for storm water. Building six large houses and paving the existing gravel path would convert most of the site from an area that retains storm water to one with mostly impervious surfaces that drastically increase run-off. Since this is a high point in the neighborhood, it would erode and otherwise degrade the Sligo Creek watershed unless a well-thought out and significant effort is made to control run-off.

Montgomery County has spent approximately \$2.6 million to address runoff impacts and mitigate damages in Sligo Creek. The *Friends of Sligo Creek* encourages the County Government to ensure that development of this site, if it takes place, will not reverse the progress the County and creek has made.

Sincerely,

Ann Hoffnar, Co-president
Friends of Sligo Creek

Cc: State Sen. Sharon Grosfeld
State Rep. Richard Madelino
Rick Brush, MC Dept. of Permitting Services
David Kuykendall, MC Dept. of Permitting Services
Joseph Cheung, MC Dept. of Permitting Services
Nick Kotzalas, MC Dept. of Permitting Services
Robert Hubbard, MC Dept. of Permitting Services
Steve Federline, M-NCPPS
Dominic Quatrocchi, Montgomery County Forestry Board

Cameron Wiegand, MC Dept. of Environmental Protection
Laura Miller, MC Dept. of Environmental Protection
James A. Caldwell, MC Dept. of Environmental Protection
Derick Berlage, Chairman, MC Planning Commission
Caron Madsen, Woodside Hills Citizens Alliance
Chris Swarth, Friends of Sligo Creek