

MERION COMMUNITY COALITION

February 5, 2009

Dear Father Lannon,

The more than 370 concerned citizens comprising the Merion Community Coalition (MCC) appreciated receiving your December 5 letter. We value our relationship with Saint Joseph's University (SJU) and look forward to a constructive and respectful partnership as the University explores its vision for use of the Maguire Campus. We write today to reiterate our desire for open lines of accurate communication during these planning stages.

First, as we have previously stated, MCC shares your intent for this project: that ultimately the Maguire Campus will be used to benefit SJU's student body. It is with deep sincerity that we say we are *not* opposed to SJU students playing baseball, softball and field hockey on the Maguire Campus. Nor do we intend to discourage greater weekday participation in SJU's intramural programs that will find a more than adequate home on the former grounds of Episcopal Academy.

Rather, our primary goal is to ensure that these intents are implemented in a way that preserves the peaceful character and serene nature of our community. We believe this goal can be reached by working in a mutually beneficial manner to arrive at a compromise that reflects the values of each party involved.

With this in mind, your letter referenced the community meetings that began last spring, *before* we organized and formed the MCC, to discuss SJU's plans for the Maguire Campus. Today it is our strong concern that despite those prior meetings and our subsequent correspondence to SJU representatives, the University has not specifically addressed the concerns enumerated by MCC. These concerns include:

- Increased and intrusive noise from games, spectators and PA systems – noise that cannot be mitigated by the simple planting of trees around the fields' perimeters and is exacerbated by excavation of the baseball field and the removal of the Carriage House;
- Increased intensity of use by both varsity and intramural teams – *especially* on weekends and on weekday afternoons into the early evening hours (we still await a complete description of the anticipated use of the athletic fields, including varsity sports and intramural schedules);
- Increased traffic, parking and crowd issues at SJU games – *especially* on weekends when there are no restrictions for on-street parking in the neighborhood;
- The visual impact that would result from the installation of a 35-foot fence.

We have expressed these concerns in numerous forms, including our November 20, 2008 letter to Joan Chrestay, to which we have received no response. These issues have arisen largely as a result of the University's enhanced plans (described below) for the Maguire Campus – none of which was explicitly described or detailed for the community in the original proposal presented and approved by the Zoning Hearing Board in 2005-2006, and include:

- The addition of three PA systems;
- The construction of permanent bleachers with seating capacity for a total of 800 patrons on three fields;
- The installation of three artificial turf fields;
- The demolition of three buildings; and
- The construction of a new 35-foot fence along Latch's Lane.

In short, despite your stated commitment to resolving the issues raised by the community surrounding the University, the plans for the Maguire Campus have grown in scope from the exhibits shown to the neighbors in 2005 without prior discussion with the neighbors, which serves to regrettably exacerbate our concerns.

As we expressed in our November letter to Mrs. Chrestay, we await a response to our repeated requests for information regarding the anticipated use of the proposed athletics fields by varsity and intramural programs. Once we attain a complete understanding of the University's plans for the athletic complex on the Maguire Campus, we will be able to give serious consideration to possible compromise proposals.

It still is our hope that we can schedule a meeting with you and other University officials involved in the planning for the Maguire Campus at your earliest convenience. We recognize that both parties will need to compromise, and we believe a meeting – with substantive discussion of the concerns we have enumerated here and in prior correspondence – will be a productive step to that end.

Sincerely,

The MCC