

June 20, 2019

Robin Proebsting / Senior Planner Community Planning & Development City of Mercer Island 9611 SE  
36th St, Mercer Island, 98040 206.275.7717

Dear Robin and City of Mercer Island  
Re: Old B&G Site, East Seattle School, Plans for Development

I am writing to ask to take more time for further community consultation, and input and influence in the decisions and plans related to the old Boys' and Girls Club property / East Seattle School site.

This property has been a public and community asset, for most of its history. It has been in the public domain with building(s) of historical significance, and is one of the only remaining large site properties on Mercer Island and should be treated differently than other private properties. The site was a school and then a Boys & Girls Club and always an asset that extended the green-space and recreation space for the community on the north end of Mercer Island and for the whole of Mercer Island.

I lived across the street of the MIB&G club location for 3 years and one block away from it now for 36 years; a total of 39 years in its vicinity. The uses of the greenspace at the club are many: both organized recreation and 'passive' recreation, it has been an integral space contributing to the quality of life for many Islanders. The space is used organically and informally by the community as a passive park for connection to nature, recreation and greenspace. Here are some of the things I witnessed or participated in:

- Formal and informal t-ball
- Families and children: Ball throwing fetch games with dogs
- Tag games, children
- Gatherings for watching the Blue Angels, complete with music from across the street
- Family football games on Thanksgiving and other weekends
- Snow games with kids and dogs in the Winter
- Basketball on the parking lot with teenage boys
- Teenage boys pickup softball
- Teenage boys and girls pickup dodgeball
- Volleyball
- Sitting in the grass
- Safe space for walking from Secret Park to neighboring streets
- Ball throwing grandparents with grandchildren
- Soccer practices
- Many, many Parks and Rec formal and informal programs during summer

The absence of this open greenspace will significantly affect the quality and availability of options for park uses and recreation for the neighboring community of East Seattle and the use of the space has been from residents from other parts of Mercer Island as well.

*I request that these considerations be part of what is reviewed as the City evaluates the development plans.*

The density of the current plan does not allow for open space nor community uses of open space. 14 houses on the 2.8 acres is too many! The density and single-family nature of these houses will not permit any space that can accommodate the uses noted above, and taking this land from public use to private is taking a community asset without mitigation and with very little benefit to the community beyond the private gain to the developer.

I am writing to ask that you find a way for fewer houses to be developed on this property, and for leaving open sufficient space that can be used for passive park and recreational uses by the community... OR: that the space be considered for the possibility for denser, nicely designed, smaller housing that preserves community open space. We need to begin to be more creative about space on Mercer Island in how housing is developed.

I don't know how Mercer Island can allow the transference of property that has been in the public domain to private development without acknowledging and preserving at least a significant portion of the benefits this brought to the public domain: open space for passive use and community recreation.

I ask you to find a way. You would have many neighbors and Mercer Island residents who would support this, and many who would miss this very much once it is gone.

I am asking for more review, and more community input before moving ahead with the project.

Lynn Hagerman  
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