

Dear Members of the Scarsdale Village Planning Board,

My name is Julie Zhu. I am writing to you all with regard to the proposal to build four 80' tall permanent lights on Butler Field, which has come before you for review.

"You will love it here, as our nickname is a village in a park!" My Houlihan Lawrence realtor exclaimed as she drove us along Heathcote Road and then looped back on Mamaroneck Road. She was absolutely right. Since becoming Scarsdalians, our family has enjoyed immensely the endless tree-lined streets, with set back homes surrounded by well-proportioned yards, and the sheer tranquility when night falls. It is indeed a beautiful and serene park-like setting.

I am afraid that is about to change for many of us who reside in the vicinity of Butler Field, as our School Board has accepted a generous private donation from Maroon and White to erect four 80' tall permanent lights on the turf field there. As illustrated in the attached three photos I took recently of similar 80' lights at a field on the Fordham University campus, the scope of this proposed development of Butler Field will *permanently* alter the landscape and visual character of the surrounding neighborhood, as the 80' lights will be clearly visible and disproportionately tower well above the treetops.

In addition to the visual impact, the proposed development of Butler Field will affect the residential character of the surrounding area even more profoundly in terms of increased traffic and noise. Already this neighborhood is affected by traffic and noise associated with the daytime, and occasional nighttime, activities of the school, along with various seasonal Village recreation activities, including summer camp. The addition of permanent lights on Butler Field requires this same residential neighborhood to bear the additional burden of a regular extension of traffic and noise, including noise from PA sound system announcements and music, well into the nighttime.

Moreover, once the lights are installed, it appears that there are virtually no limits to their usage. While initially the rationale for the lights was connected to Scarsdale High School athletic teams' ability to host home games, the project is now being promoted as a means to address the athletic and recreation competition and practice needs of the schools and the Village, as well as the various independent sports organizations, so that all ages and levels might have an opportunity "under the lights". And not just athletic uses are being proposed in order to "build community spirit." The School Board has referred to holding graduation under the lights, and a Maroon & White representative offered that the lights would enable the community to hold outdoor concerts.

The School Board has stated that it does not want its hands tied and has therefore declined to address residents' expressed concerns by setting reasonable limitations on the usage of the Butler Field lights. Based on the School Board discussion at their meeting on May 13, there is little doubt that there will be tremendous pressure to use the lit Butler Field to the maximum. As one Board member stated, without any disagreement from other Board members, "I'm all for keeping flexibility and putting virtually no limits on practices except those that the athletic department chooses to put on as part of its own management

of schedules of practice and wellness and every other consideration." (see
- <https://vimeopro.com/scarsdaleschoolstv/boe-2018-2019/page/2> around minute 49:35)

With such unlimited ensuing nighttime traffic and noise, and especially the noise from PA system loudspeakers, what will happen to our neighborhood's park-like setting and ability to enjoy relative peace and quiet after dark?

Curious about the origin of our real estate broker's phrase "A Village in a Park," I did a little research and found that it is actually stipulated in our Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Preface to the Plan states that Scarsdale "is one of the most attractive" communities within the New York metropolitan region, that "it's single family neighborhoods, tree lined streets and network of open spaces give Scarsdale a unique natural character," and that it is one of the Plan's four goals to "maintain the image of a Village in a Park."

While pressure on the Village to give the green light to a proposed development of such potential unlimited scope is no doubt mounting, I urge you to carefully deliberate on the addition of permanent lights to Butler Field and to please specifically consider: (1) whether this project at this site is the appropriate way to address the community's field usage needs; (2) the unfair burden on one residential neighborhood of making this single lighted turf field the answer to such a broad range of turf field usage needs; and (3) the impact on a residential neighborhood in such close proximity to a development the scope of which will irreversibly alter its "Village in a Park" character .

Sincerely yours,

~ Julie Zhu

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