

**Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
And
Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, Inc.**

October 27, 2005

Hon. Douglas Duncan
County Executive, Montgomery County
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Hon. Derick Berlage
Chair, Montgomery County Park and Planning
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Capital Crescent Trail Right-of-Way at River Road

Dear Mr. Duncan and Mr. Berlage,

We write jointly to express concern over the condition of the right-of-way adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail at River Road, and to propose a joint public-private initiative to improve the appearance of the area and to enhance its usefulness to trail users.

For some years this area has been converted to private use for the parking of cars and trucks by an abutting business, the Minkoff Company. As you know, the Minkoff Company had promised to make extensive landscaping improvements in return for their private use of this publicly owned property. It is clear beyond argument that the Minkoff Company has no intention of fulfilling its obligations. Each of our organizations has recently communicated with you detailing our concern and disappointment that the promised improvements were not produced. To date we have not received a reply to our letters. (Copies attached)

CCCT and CCCFH would like to move beyond the issue of the Minkoff agreement and the private parking lot that company has enjoyed over the last many years. We propose the following:

- Parking of any kind be prohibited along the right-of-way
- Money owing by Minkoff to the county for past parking rights be used to remove the asphalt and prepare the area for landscape improvements
- The Parks Department's level of commitment for planting and other improvements (as part of the Minkoff negotiations) remain and be implemented.
- The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail will provide funds for a seating area, water fountain, information kiosk and other landscape improvements.

- The funds being held in escrow by the Parks Department for the George Edwards memorial be expended for additional landscaping, trees and benches.
- The Citizens Coordination Committee on Friendship Heights, fifteen civic associations and over 20,000 households, will use its best efforts to solicit additional private donations for trees, benches and other landscape improvements.

It is our hope that this grassroots community proposal will trump whatever ongoing conversations your respective agencies may be having with the Minkoff Company. That company has demonstrated a total unwillingness to proceed with any meaningful improvements, as required by contract, and it has forfeited whatever claim it may have had in the past.

On behalf of the over one million annual trail users, and the thousands of households in this area, we urge you to accept our proposal. The area has been an eyesore for far too many years. In our letter to you last month we expressed concern about the message being sent to the community by the failure of the public-private partnership between the county and the Minkoff Company. Agreeing to work directly with established community organizations as outlined above will go a long way toward rebuilding citizen confidence in the efficacy of such endeavors.

Very truly yours,

Ernie Brooks for CCCT
BrooksEW@hotmail.com

Ron Tripp for CCCFH
rtripp@erols.com

Cc: Council President Tom Perez
Councilmember Nancy Floreen
Councilmember George Leventhal
Councilmember Steve Silverman
Councilmember Mike Subin
Councilmember Howard Denis
Councilmember Mike Knapp
Councilmember Phil Andrews
Councilmember Marilyn Praisner
Planning Boardmember Wendy Perdue
Planning Boardmember Allison Bryant
Planning Boardmember Meredith Wellington
Planning Boardmember John Robinson

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