

PRESS RELEASE

Friends of McMillan Park

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McMillan Park Town Hall Meeting: *Our Historic Landmark Deserves Better*

Friends of McMillan Park (FOM) held a Town Hall meeting on Saturday, September 14th at St. Martin's Church in Bloomingdale that attracted over 100 attendees. A wide variety of speakers described the Gray Administration's plan to destroy historic landmark McMillan Park, discussed potential alternative solutions, and recommended [ways for the community to join the fight](#). Following the informational portion of the meeting, attendees participated in small group discussions in which consensus was clear – The Mayor's plan is unsuitable for our neighborhood and better plans are out there, if the Administration would only seek them out.

During the discussions, residents raised serious concerns about how the proposed development would affect transportation, storm water management, and the site's historic vistas. They also criticized the lack of cohesiveness of the current plan and objected to its failure to preserve the unique qualities of this national landmark [Olmsted park](#).

Over the course of the afternoon, FOM collected signatures on their petition to the District government to reject the Mayor's plan, bringing the total number of signatories to almost 4,800. The organization also did a brisk trade in sales of t-shirts, buttons, and stickers, netting hundreds of dollars to devote to the battle for the Park's preservation. "It is encouraging to see that so many people in the community feel so strongly about respecting the dignity of this landmark," said Paul Cerruti, a Bloomingdale resident who is researching [McMillan Park newspaper archives](#) to understand its historical importance as an activity center for the surrounding communities from the early 1900's until World War II. "There are so many better options available for the transformation of McMillan – ones that would honor this site's rich history – but Mayor Gray refuses to consider anything other than the destructive VMP plan."

In addition to the historic archive research, town hall attendees heard an audio excerpt from an ongoing oral history project documenting the stories of long-time residents who used to enjoy McMillan Park as the District's first de facto racially integrated recreation space. The recording featured [Ben Franklin](#), a 79 year-old Bloomingdale resident who reminisced about playing at McMillan as a child and sleeping there when the weather was warm. "All this was in the '40s and '50s. You could walk or play in there. When my children came along this was all fenced in," said Mr. Franklin.

Friends of McMillan Park thanks Father Kelley of St. Martin's Church for allowing the use of the space, as well as the generous [local businesses that donated food and drink](#) for the event.

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Extended summary of McMillan Park Town Hall Meeting: <http://bit.ly/1buukaZ>