

March 21, 2023

Favorable on SB944

Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission (MNCPPC) we want to thank Vice Chairman Waldstreicher for introducing SB944 - Maryland Historical Trust - Warner Manor in the Town of Kensington - Extinguishment or Termination of Easement. This is a very simple and non controversial bill.

Montgomery Parks, part of The MNCPPC, in conjunction with Montgomery County Government, has entered into an agreement to transfer the historic Circle Manor and Carriage House at Warner Circle Park to Washington Landmark Construction (WLC) to develop residential condominiums.

Montgomery Parks acquired Warner Circle Special Park in 2005 to preserve the historic landscape as a public park and find an adaptive reuse for the historic buildings. Since then, the Parks Department has invested significant resources to stabilize and maintain the historic structures and find a partner that would fully restore the properties, ensuring their long-term preservation while maintaining public access to the park.

The developer, WLC, is currently conducting a study of the grounds to test soils and is preparing a detailed archaeological survey. Montgomery Parks and WLC will finalize the sale of the buildings after the design has been completed and the necessary approvals have been obtained.

The proposed design will be reviewed by all the authorities having jurisdiction, including Montgomery Parks and the Historic Preservation Commission, which will hold a hearing before approval. Montgomery Parks will issue Park Construction and Archeology permits before any construction activities begin. Construction on the project, which will include an addition, is expected to begin in the summer of 2023 and last about 18 months.

The property transfer has already been approved by the planning board and the council, and the town of Kensington and the Friends of Warner Circle have been very involved and supportive of this project.

As part of the process we simply need the Maryland Historical Trust Easement removed which SB944 does.

Thank you for your consideration of a favorable report on SB944.

PJ Hogan