

Resident Comments Regarding the Resolution Establishing Rules for the Uses of the East and West Wood Preserves

Dear Councilors,

I respect the intention of the Woods Committee as stated in the resolution, “establishing rules and regulations for the use and enjoyment of the East and West Wood Preserves and any Town park or land.” I have no problem posting most of the rules in the resolution.

One of the items in the resolution requires everyone to stay on the delineated path at all times. I am a retired teacher and school counselor. I know that children develop through discovery and through the use of their senses. Denying the option to leave the path to explore to touch, smell, or get a closer look at a tree, flower, insect, or whatever enchants children is a missed opportunity for natural development and to instill a love of the woods.

Building structures is not allowed. Children engaging in building forts or fanciful fairy houses encourages creativity and strengthens math skills. Play is learning and appreciation for the woods can promote stewardship.

Our woods are not a national or state park. It is a community woods to be fully experienced by all ages.

Another regulation of concern involves the prohibition of bicycles. Currently there are several attempts to make Washington Grove more welcoming to neighboring communities. For example, the Border Committee installed identity makers which make it inviting for people to walk on Town paths and they are in the process of creating welcoming signs. The bike regulation seems to counter these efforts for inclusion. Neighbors ride bikes through the West Woods to get to the bus stop. This is a practical matter, not for recreation. I am sure this was not the intention of the Woods Committee, but we do not want to inadvertently echo a negative chapter of Washington Grove history when gates were closed to Emory Grove residents which hindered them from easy access to the train station.

Paula Puglisi