

Restoration of a Meadow Environment in Our Conservation Meadow Park 21 Sept. 2024

To: Mayor Compton and Town Councilors Rob Gilmore, Kriss Grisham, Peter Nagrod, Eva Patrone, Barbara Raimondo, and Mary Warfield

CC: Town Clerk, Kathy Lehman and Town Web Manager, Christine Dibble

Dear Mayor Compton and Town Councilors,

The Meadows Committee respectfully submits these comments concerning the meadow restoration plan.

We have listened to the feedback from neighbors who have various objections to the meadow restoration proposal, and we agree -- as we will get into below -- with some of what we heard. We have also had feedback from neighbors who are delighted that something is finally being done.

The species that Montgomery County is most in danger of losing are meadow species. As Montgomery Park's Ryan Colliton told us on Sept. 18 (audio recording attached), MoCo has a robust program to protect forests, but has not had the same for meadows. Many of us are children of the 60's, when one could capture enough fireflies easily in a Mason Jar to make a flashlight. Dragonflies such as the meadow hawk were abundant. Clouds of monarch butterflies passed through our gardens. No more.

And it's not only the insects, but also the birds, reptiles and amphibians that feed on those insects that are in decline. North America has lost 3 billion birds out of the 8 billion bird population just 50 years ago. Of course, Washington Grove alone cannot solve this problem, but we have an opportunity to be part of the solution. By reducing the red cedar population and introducing a variety of meadow plants, we can create a healthier, more attractive meadow that is in flower for more of the year and therefore capable of supporting more wildlife.

We urge everyone in the Grove to become informed. Listen to Ryan Colliton's comments and read the meeting notes. Read about the importance of meadow ecosystems. Visit Rachel Carson Conservation Park (22201 Zion Road, Olney, MD 20833) to see a vibrant meadow restoration in progress (45 plant species introduced). Review the attached plant list from Pope Farm, from which Montgomery Parks will source the plants for our meadow (we can have a say about which ones). It's not necessary for you to join the committee to volunteer for Weed Warrior events or planting events, but please let us know if you are willing to help. Consider becoming a certified Weed Warrior yourself.

One concern we heard loud and clear was the fear that there would be a lack of follow through -- that the trees would be cut down but then interest would wane. The Meadows Committee is an *ad hoc* committee established to see if a working relationship with Parks could be reestablished and then, as with other *ad hoc* committees, it would disband and

hopefully another town committee would step in. The feedback was that more certainty of continuity was needed, and we agree. Therefore, we propose that the Meadows Committee be approved by Town Council as a new standing committee, continuing to liaise with Parks and driving forward the restoration effort. We are happy to say that Montgomery Parks has shown a great willingness to work with us in a constructive manner. And let's not forget, it is Montgomery Parks' land to manage *as a meadow*, and doing so is also consistent with our objective to preserve the historic setting of the Town.

Another piece of feedback was that people were having difficulty envisioning the visual changes that the tree reduction would bring. We have arranged for Ryan Colliton to return the week of Sept. 23 to flag the trees proposed for removal – both phase 1 and phase 2, in distinct colors.

Let's not have future generations learn about the [monarch butterfly](#) or [meadowlark](#) the same way that we learned about the dodo and the passenger pigeon. Let's be part of the solution.

Respectfully,

The Meadows Committee

Supporting Files:

- 1) Audio recording of Ryan Colliton at the meadow meeting held on Sept. 18, 2024
- 2) Notes from the meadow meeting on Sept. 18. 2024
- 3) Plant list from Pope Farm