

## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING – MARCH 21, 2006**

**TESTIMONY OF:** KIM ABOD  
PARENT, SEVEN LOCKS ELEMENTARY

**SUBJECT:** SEVEN LOCKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD:** I AM IN FAVOR OF COUNCILMAN DENIS'S AMENDMENT TO BUILD A NEW SCHOOL ON THE CURRENT SEVEN LOCKS SITE

Good Evening, President Leventhal and Members of the County Council. My name is Kim Abod and I am a Seven Locks Elementary School parent. Thank you for providing the communities multiple opportunities to share our views and concerns regarding the proposed changes to Seven Locks Elementary. It is encouraging to work with our government to provide the best possible long-term solution for our children and our communities.

I would like to begin my testimony tonight by addressing the misconception that our community is more concerned about property values than the interests of the children. This is not about property values. This is about finding a solution that best serves the interests of the children while continuing to support our community.

The Seven Locks community is wonderfully diverse – representing a number of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Seven Locks Elementary is a focal point for this diversity. It provides us with something in common and is the cornerstone of our community. Our strong sense of community and our involvement in the school contributes to the success of our children at Seven Locks.

Our PTA sponsors a number of events that are open to our entire school and are designed to build our community. These events are the only opportunities that some parents have to foster relationships and become part of the community. The ability to have easy access to these events, as well as any school sponsored events, is critical to their success. I believe that the current location of Seven Locks Elementary is superior to the Kendale Road site for the following reasons:

- 1) We currently have over two miles of sidewalks that connect surrounding neighborhoods directly to the front door of our school. Thanks to the Seven Locks Civic Association and the County Council, we will be getting additional sidewalks in the near future, as well as improvements to our intersection.

Flanked by gullies, narrow Kendale Road will have NO options for pedestrian access.

- 2) In addition to sidewalk access from neighboring streets, we currently enjoy an overflow parking arrangement with the church across the street.

The solution for overflow parking at the Kendale Road site is to bus parents from an alternate location. Bussing is inconvenient and will be a deterrent for time-constrained parents. Lack of convenient access to the school, would no doubt, have a detrimental impact on the students and our community.

I support Councilman Denis's CIP Amendment to build a larger school on the current Seven Locks site. The amendment provides a new option that would keep our community intact. Equally important, it provides much needed overcrowding relief for other schools in our cluster. Not only would our community welcome these new families with open arms, we look forward to the additional resources a larger school has to offer.

In closing, I ask that the County Council, MCPS, the Board of Education and the Special Task Force carefully consider the impact to the community of the various options on the table. A strong community is a key component of the foundation for a successful school.

Thank you for your time this evening.