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June 15, 2022

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors  
1 Harrison St SE  
PO Box 7000  
Leesburg, VA 20177

SUBJECT: Scott Jenkins Memorial Park, SPEX 2021-0025

To Board of Supervisors:

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy concurs with the Planning Commission's recommendation of denial of this application, and we agree that lighting ballfields in rural areas is not appropriate. The 2019 General Plan calls for lighting standards that "preserve the natural beauty of the night sky, and minimize impacts on people, plants, and wildlife", and this proposal is not compatible with that vision.

While the Planning Commission recognized the need for ballfields and acknowledged technological advances in lighting since the park was originally approved, the majority agreed this location was not appropriate due to:

- The incompatibility of lighted fields with the rural character of the area.
- The inability to ensure minimal impacts from light pollution on the surrounding properties.

The impacts of sky glow on the rural night sky would include permanent negative impacts to the rural character of the area and surrounding wildlife. Additionally, the previous approval of the park included a condition to not have lights for the park mainly due to concerns from neighboring properties and agricultural businesses. Our research indicates that funding was available for lights at that time, and that it was transferred to Franklin Park due to this condition for approval. Community opposition still exists, and the County ought to abide by the original conditions for approval for this park.

While portions of this proposal are compatible with some International Dark Sky Association standards, overall, in this area residents have an expectation to see little or no lighting, and as such it should be classified as a Light Zone 0. Lighted ballfields are not recommended in these areas, and therefore this application does not comply with arguably the most important dark sky standards designed to prevent light pollution.

Ultimately, the negative impacts to the area outweigh the potential modest increase in park usage. This proposal violates the original 2009 agreement the County made when they constructed the ballfields, and it is incompatible with the current Comp Plan's policies to prevent light pollution. Preventing light pollution and protecting our dark skies is important for the health of our ecosystems, especially insects and bird migration.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michael Myers  
Executive Director

**PO Box 1892, Leesburg, VA 20177**