

July 27, 2004

Dear Dr. Hilewick and Messieurs Parr and Murtagh:

This is in response to your emails dated July 14 about the removal of a trashcan located near the Sligo Creek Park swing set and University Boulevard. Mr. Murtagh also commented in his email to Mr. Parr that “many of the trash barrels were never returned....”

It was our understanding with the Council that we replace approximately 50 out of 149 cans in the more vulnerable stream valley parks of Long Branch, Rock Creek, and Sligo Creek as well as other parks near streams. Attached is the list of the number of cans in those areas in place before the Carry-In, Carry-Out Program and where the 50 cans are now in place. Continuing to replace trashcans makes it more difficult for us to report on the program’s evaluation, which the Council is expecting by December 2004. We are convinced that the Carry-In, Carry-Out Program must be given a fair trial to allow for public education and behavior modification to take place.

We would appreciate your reminding citizens that we have not abandoned the parks just because there are no trashcans. Rather, to control the litter, we send out a litter control crew to each of our parks on a weekly basis, and have asked our trim, mowing, and ballfield crews to add ground litter control to their responsibilities before they begin their regular duties. We also ask the public to contact the Park Police at (301) 949-8010 if they happen to be an eyewitness to any violation of park policies, such as littering or using port-a-johns in which to throw their trash or dog waste bags.

We had left a number of trashcans in parks where certain jurisdictions expressed an interest in taking responsibility for trash collection. When they finally decided that they could not follow through, we began removing those trashcans, including the subject trashcan. Because of a recent installation of a large filtration system in the stream near Sligo and University, we have, therefore, decided it would be in the best interest of all to keep a trashcan at that location.

If you have continued concerns about the maintenance of our parks, please call the new centralized Park Maintenance Service Center telephone number, (301) 670-8080. We have developed a process to log, track, and fill service requests in the most efficient and cost-saving manner using a highly sophisticated technological software system. Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention.

Sincerely,

Lester L. Straw
Superintendent of Parks