

Edith R Wilson
President, Shirlington Civic Association
Remarks to the Planning Commission, Arlington County
Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Thank you, Madame Chair. My name is Edie Wilson and I am the president of Shirlington Civic Association. My remarks concern PDSP #106, Parcels 2 and 3, a request from Federal Realty Investment Trust for a Special GLUP study. Federal Realty is course the property owner for the Village of Shirlington. Our civic association is larger than the Village, enclosing eight home owner associations and three rental buildings all the way up to the corner of Rt. 7 and Walter Reed Drive. There is not one single family home in this area.

It's almost 30 years since the Village was developed. My husband and I just renovated our condo in the Village on the corner of South Arlington Mill Drive and Campbell. It was built during the second phase 15 years ago. It needed it.

So does the older part of the Village. Just like a home, commercial properties such as the Village need reinvestment. To succeed, the Village needs a committed landlord. We are very happy with ours. But we certainly understand that the landlord needs to maximize its investment and generate income in order to justify substantial expenditures. This Planning Commission needs to consider how to keep developments such as ours up-to-date, not just approve

new projects. This is something we would call to the attention of this Planning Commission.

The request from Federal Realty for a Special GLUP Study of their remaining undeveloped parcel at 2766 S Arlington Mill Drive is welcome. We want to consult with our community in the process ahead but it is safe to say that we have no special attachment to this surface parking lot. We assume replacement parking will be incorporated into any new design. The best word that can be used to describe this parcel right now is “unprepossessing.” From the street, well, it looks bad.

We are grateful that CPHD has just agreed to take up this matter in its busy 2018 work schedule and are glad to commit to engaging in the necessary process with the County and this Commission.

If this development proceeds, however, the community would expect the landlord to commit to a schedule for updating and making improvements of the overall Village property to keep it competitive with other urban village-type properties built after Shirlington. This is particularly important since Shirlington will never have Metro service as do many of these newer sites.

We understand that there is a conversation to be had about increasing density in the Village. I’m sure we can sort that out. We are not eager for a GLUP review of the

larger Village of Shirlington area. We really don't see the need for it.

This request about the S Arlington Mill Drive site is particularly timely because all of us will be able to look at its potential in the context of a completed master plan for the Four Mile Run Valley, and do this while we – staff and community – are up to speed on the details of that planning effort. This parcel is one of the last remaining large pieces in the puzzle, so to speak, and an important one. I think we could do something really special here, just like the rest of our Village.

I have a meeting soon with Mr. Duffy and his staff, where we can discuss this in more detail. But in general, let's keep it simple and focused. I agree with his comments last night that these processes need to be less cumbersome and time-consuming. Our community leadership is exhausted after two years of 4MRV planning discussions. At least I am.

In the end, we are looking for a larger reinvestment in the Village's appearance, facades, infrastructure and so on, not just a new building. This is very important to the future of Shirlington, and, we submit, to Arlington.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

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