



**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414  
Arlington, Virginia 22201**



February 4, 2019

Honorable Christian Dorsey  
Chair, Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: American Legion/APAH Project

Dear Chairman Dorsey:

The Park and Recreation Commission participated in SPRC meetings concerning the development of the proposed new site plan to demolish the existing American Legion post and to construct a new 160-unit seven story residential building as a joint venture with APAH. Although we understand that the project has no major open space components, we would like to share our thoughts on some of the outdoor space components of the current plan—particularly as they impact on the neighborhood.

The frontage on the first floor of the building and the fencing area should be maximized for the public as much as possible. The applicant and staff explained that because of the transportation design of the project and fire access requirements, much of the fence border area cannot be planted with anything other than ground cover, leaving only two feet left for the fence and planting. But we urge that special attention be put on maximizing plantings that work in that space. A proposal to have additional plantings on the neighborhood side of the fence was mentioned at the last SPRC meeting and we recommend that the applicant and staff work with the neighbors. We are happy to see that the site has no known storm water issues and that there are bio retention planters and a green roof at the lower level as part of EarthCraft Gold certification of the site.

In addition to creating as much needed green lines of sight, and with concerns for impacts on the neighbors, it also essential that light pollution from the garage incline is minimized. There has been discussion about the effect of late night headlights on neighborhood windows and we urge the applicant to continue to work on building, fencing, and planting design to ameliorate these issues.

The construction plan has been set as minimally invasive, however it is important both for the neighborhood and the future of the site that there is care taken to preserve existing trees (especially near the proposed fencing). The applicant has said that the street trees, sidewalk and planting strip will be replanted once the construction is completed but, where possible, it would be preferable to keep the vegetation (especially trees) that is already on the site.

We also heard discussion about the pedestrian circulation proposed for the project and are sympathetic with the concerns of neighbors about too-easy access through this part of the block between the single

family neighborhood and the APAH building. We believe that the proposed plan is in line with broader County planning guidelines that call for improved pedestrian access in and through our urban blocks. Ease of access to current and future open spaces (such as envisioned next door for part of the YMCA site) is a central component of the impending Public Spaces Master Plan.

Finally, while we understand that this project itself does not provide additional, publically available open space, we look forward to the improvement and building of the open spaces called for in the Special GLUP study—notably at the Ball Burial Grounds and the YMCA property.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William W. Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

William Ross  
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Members, Planning Commission