

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
c/o Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705
Arlington, VA 22201

May 20, 2019

The Honorable Christian Dorsey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Programmatic Agreement regarding the Arlington County and Vicinity Boathouse

Dear Chair Dorsey:

The Environment and Energy Conservation Commission (E2C2) requests that the County Board take no action to authorize the County Manager to sign the Programmatic Agreement relating to construction of a boathouse on the upper Rosslyn site until such time as the project and its siting has been reviewed through a suitable Arlington County stakeholder process.

It is our understanding that the project has been under consideration by the County for well over 20 years in some form or another. During that time period, neither the County Board, nor County staff have consulted with E2C2 regarding the potential environmental impacts of the project. A presentation was made to E2C2 in 2004 by the Arlington Boathouse Foundation. At that time E2C2 wrote to the Board urging that the project be evaluated from an environmental perspective and that E2C2 and the public be given the opportunity to assist in the evaluation. There has been no such engagement with E2C2 or the Arlington public.

The Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP), adopted by the County Board on April 25, 2019, identified 2105 North Lynn Street (formerly known as 1101 Lee Highway) as a park that would undergo a master planning effort (see Priority Action 7, recommendation 1.5.9, PSMP page 68). It is very concerning that the County would even consider committing this location to a use without any public engagement, especially within a month of PSMP adoption.

E2C2 acknowledges that the National Park Service conducted a public process for the proposed project during the current EA process. However, that process was primarily focused on historical rather than environmental issues, and no Arlington environmental organizations were engaged during the process.

The proposed project will be constructed in an environmentally sensitive area, within the Resource Protection Area, with significant impact to tree cover, and impacts to stormwater quality and wildlife habitat. Execution of this agreement with the NPS will commit the boathouse to the “preferred alternative” location, a commitment that E2C2 is concerned will define the project going forward and limit the County’s ability to make significant adjustments to the project concept or configuration in the future.

Such a significant project should not be pursued by Arlington County without a thorough review of the project by County stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Michael Hanna". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Mike Hanna, Chair
Environment and Energy Conservation Commission