



**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

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



December 15, 2014

Honorable Jay Fiset, Chairman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: The Future of Rosslyn Highlands Park

Dear Chairman Fiset:

The Park and Recreation Commission has serious concerns about the potential loss of open space at Rosslyn Highlands Park.

The presentation provided to the Western Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS) Working Group on December 8 by the developer Penzance would eliminate the current park, and transfer the open space from public to private ownership. This alternative, the only alternative presented in detail by Penzance, would result in a park that would fail to meet the diverse recreation and open space needs of the Rosslyn community.

With increasing population in Rosslyn and the desire of families to live within the corridor, our current and future citizens desperately need recreation and open space amenities to maintain the County's high quality of life. There is currently insufficient space for field and court games in Rosslyn and the closest playground for young children is approximately ½ mile away. Rosslyn Highlands Park is used at all times, day and night, by the residents of Rosslyn.

It was clear from the 75 community members who attended the WRAPS workshop on November 8 that the Rosslyn community places the highest priority on open space. As the County staff detailed in their summary of the meeting, community members articulated a desire for:

- Additional open space, in the center of the study area;
- A street aligned at the eastern border of the study area, to allow for a larger, consolidated open space; and
- Increased heights, if open space can be gained.

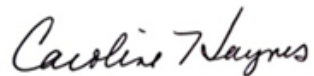
Beyond the need of neighborhood residents, the new school users will need open space and sports/recreation amenities at the site. With the likely relocation of the H-B Woodlawn program to the Wilson School site, the site should support the seven ultimate Frisbee teams that are an essential element of the program's culture and identity. The loss of Rosslyn Highlands Park would severely impact the ability to construct fields large enough to accommodate the Frisbee programs, forcing these seven teams to find alternate practice locations and compete for fields that are already fully programmed.

Clearly there is strong concern within the community about sacrificing existing open space for private development that would offset the cost of the new fire station. The Park and Recreation Commission shares these concerns. We also note that the initial County Board charge from July 16, 2013 indicated a minimum of 60,000 square feet for park, recreation and open space. This was changed in May 2014 to limit the open space to 60,000 square feet (including interior space). Given longstanding efforts to maximize recreation and open space in this heavily developed area, we object to setting a limit on what might be achieved through the planning process.

We encourage the County Board to consider the following steps: (1) revise the WRAPS charge to reflect the community's desire for maximizing open space on the site, and (2) explore alternatives for siting and financing the fire station, including using the County's bonding authority to fund the station and potentially looking beyond the planning area for a future fire station location. Our citizens have repeatedly and overwhelmingly voted in favor of bond issues to finance new facilities over the years and there should be strong support for public financing of a new fire station so that we don't have to lose this remaining parkland/open space in this heavily developed and underserved area.

We appreciate having the opportunity to share our views with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline Haynes".

Caroline Haynes, Chair  
Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board  
Members, Arlington County School Board  
Barbara Donnellan, County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Members, Arlington County Planning Commission  
Members, WRAPS Working Group