



**ARLINGTON COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
2100 CLARENDON BOULEVARD, SUITE 414  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201



January 31, 2017

The Honorable Jay Fisette  
Chair, Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Rosslyn Highlands Park Use Permit (SP # 445-U-16-1)

Dear Chair Fisette,

Members of the Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) received a presentation on the Use Permit for Rosslyn Highlands Park at our January 24, 2017 meeting. Members of the PRC have participated in the WRAP process from the beginning and we have a number of comments regarding both the process and the resulting product.

The PRC supported the design guidelines for Rosslyn Highlands Park+ Coordinated Open Spaces Plan, adopted by the board in September 2016. (See attached letter.) That plan was produced as a result of a lengthy community process and we were dismayed to see significant changes to the configuration and functionality of the design at the latest SPRC meeting, and at the PRC presentation last week.

As shown in the most recent design, the linear north-south park, which was to provide a naturalistic connection between Wilson Boulevard and the rest of the park, with both passive and active play spaces, is now proposed to be primarily hardscape with a stand alone elevator shaft in the center of the designated park space. We were not satisfied in our discussions with staff and the applicants that all design alternatives have been fully explored to retain the integrity of the park. In particular, we object to strict adherence of the property lines between the APS property and the county property (and we emphasize that this is *county property* and does not belong to the applicant). We can point to multiple examples of APS using existing county property for school expansions; this flexibility on land use should work both ways, especially since the property under discussion in this instance is below ground. We believe that there are creative alternatives to incorporating the elevator shaft into the adjacent buildings, and that these need to be explored more fully.

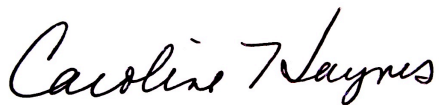
We are also concerned that the “triangles” surrounding the basketball court will have diminished functionality. We understand that the plan adopted by the board would be subjected to small modifications in the final design process, but we object to significant changes from the original plan, such as the elimination of the planned play area.

We also note that the construction of two residential buildings, instead of one residential building and one office building as was discussed in the WRAP process, significantly changes the intensity of use of this small park. We were told that the applicant intends to allow pets in the units but no internal canine run has been included in the design of the residential buildings. It is estimated that one third of residents will likely own at least one dog, which will add yet additional pressure on these very limited resources.

Lastly, we note with a great deal of sad irony that the package going before the board proposes to change the existing S-3A zoning of Rosslyn Highlands Park to C-O, and that we are being asked to support the request to include a park in the new C-O zoning. As we have stated previously, we objected to the park being rezoned for commercial use, but given the unfortunate circumstances of this entire process, we support including the park on this site. We lament the continued chipping away of our existing parks in a heavily underserved area and support any and all efforts to increase parks, open space and recreation facilities in our most densely populated areas of the county.

Thank you for this 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, Planning Commission  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Steven Cover, Director, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

Attachment