



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

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November 5, 2016

The Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Subject: Stratford School Renovation and Addition

Dear Chair Garvey:

At its October 27 meeting, the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) reviewed the proposed landscape plan for the Stratford Middle School renovation and addition. Arlington Public Schools (APS) staff, their consultants and County urban foresters have done an excellent job to fit all required replacement trees on the site and to use native species for all plantings.

UFC has two major concerns with the proposed plan. The first involves plantings along the planned road from the school to Old Dominion Drive. As you know, UFC, several other commissions and County staff opposed this road as unneeded and damaging. The road will require removal of a large number of trees and will require a great deal of fill to create an even grade for the slope up to Old Dominion Drive. The landscape plan calls for planting many trees on the new slope. It will be difficult to maintain this slope without erosion. It will be difficult to establish new trees on such a steep slope. And it will be difficult to water these trees after they are planted. We urge the County and APS to plan for the extra costs that will be required to maintain a forested slope after the road is constructed.

In the presentation to UFC, it was unclear who would be responsible for daily oversight of the contractors removing the trees needed for the school addition and the new road, and the contractors planting replacement trees. Where replacement trees are planted near existing trees, care must be taken while digging to not significantly damage the root systems of existing trees. Before construction

starts, it is imperative that the County and APS agree on responsibility for this oversight.

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nora E. Palmatier". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Nora Palmatier, Chair
Urban Forestry Commission

cc: Arlington School Board