

March 25, 2019

To the Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd #300
Arlington, VA 22201

Transmitted electronically to: Countyboard@arlingtonva.us

Dear Members of the Board:

The Glencarlyn Citizens' Association and the Forest Glen Civic Association have concerns about the County's plan to raze the existing building at the Virginia Hospital Center property on S. Carlin Springs Road once the County acquires the property. We were recently made aware of this plan when Chairman Dorsey spoke at the March 4 Glencarlyn Citizens' Association meeting. As you know, our neighborhoods will be directly affected by any activities on the property, and we have been engaged with County decision-makers ever since we first heard about the potential acquisition. We conducted a joint survey of our two neighborhoods, producing a report we shared with the Board, the School Board and the Arlington County Manager. We also actively participated in the proceedings of the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission ("JFAC"), the primary mechanism for civic engagement concerning future uses of the property. We understand that use of the property has not yet been determined and we look forward to further discussions in the future.

In the interim, we believe that the County must develop a civic engagement process for the site work involved in razing the current structure and managing the entire site prior to its ultimate use. This is a big project that could significantly and adversely affect our neighborhoods and the surrounding facilities unless planned and managed with care. We are not aware of a previous, directly comparable, project in Arlington. The Virginia Hospital Center site is large, as is the building footprint. Sensitive environments in the area include Long Branch Stream, Resource Protection Areas, and historic Moses Ball Spring. The scenic easements impose restrictions on grade modifications and removal of vegetation. Private residences are directly adjacent. Campbell Elementary School is next door, and other schools and Long Branch Nature Center are nearby. Young students walk the dangerous sidewalk next to the property. The Nature Center conducts educational activities in the Park adjacent to the easements. Active medical offices are physically connected to the existing building. S. Carlin Springs Road often has congested and dangerous traffic conditions.

Razing the current structure will be a challenging task and must be done correctly. We call your attention to our concerns and strongly request robust public engagement before plans are developed and work begins. We request, at a minimum, two timely public meetings and comment opportunities. What follows is a partial list of topics to discuss and address.

- Exactly what will be razed and what will remain
- Project schedule
- Noise mitigation measures
- Hours work will be conducted
- Traffic management plans, especially during rush hour and school openings and closings.
- Pedestrian safety plans on the sidewalks adjacent to the property
- Lighting

- Dust control and debris removal
- Watershed protection, erosion and runoff control
- Historic preservation, in particular, the historic Moses Ball Spring on the property
- Scenic easement and tree preservation
- Potential environmental health and safety issues, including but not limited to:
 - Asbestos
 - Lead
 - Medical waste
 - Toxic spills/hazardous waste
 - Underground storage tanks

Also, we recommend the County develop a plan for stewardship of the entire site before, during, and after the razing is completed. Stewardship issues include:

- Post-razing plans for site cleanup, erosion/runoff control, fill materials use (if any), management and maintenance.
- Sound natural resources management, invasive plant control, sustainable, green landscape management
- Controlled and appropriate public access, including to Moses Ball Spring, the scenic easements and natural area, and the traditional "sledding hill"

We request that County staff meet and work with us to identify an acceptable approach for a robust public engagement process which will address these concerns and others that may arise. We understand that we may not be introducing any new concerns; however we have not yet been informed of any planning. We will all benefit from a "no surprises" approach to the project. Our communities may be able to help County staff identify optimal plans. We are keenly interested, willing and able to help.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We appreciate a timely response and a commitment to schedule an initial meeting.

Respectfully,



Julie Lee, President
Glencarlyn Citizens' Association



Ron Ross, President
Forest Glen Civic Association