



# AURORA HIGHLANDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

January 3, 2024

Mr. James Lantelme  
Chair, Melwood Special GLUP Study LRPC  
Arlington County Planning Commission  
2201 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22201  
By email

Re: Melwood Special GLUP Tier 2 Study LRPC Meeting November 28, 2023, Follow Up

Dear Mr. Lantelme,

Thank you for allowing the Aurora Highlands Civic Association (AHCA) to present at the LRPC meeting on November 28, 2023. However, due to the time limitations of the LRPC meeting format, we feel that the issues we listed in our presentation as well as comments from the public were not adequately addressed. As we noted in the presentation, we are volunteers, and we have spent countless hours reviewing this proposal by Melwood and we should be able to expect responses to these questions as well as previous correspondence that has not yet been responded to. As a reminder from the 2008 legislation, the intent of the GLUP Study is to “objectively assess the implications of the proposed changes and whether they comport with the County’s long term planning principles and goals.” We therefore expect the county will in its study perform a thorough review the proposed changes **objectively (eg, pros and cons)** in terms of **each of the Comprehensive Plan components**, and any other relevant long term planning documents. We request a response to this letter and all outstanding previous correspondence at least two weeks prior to the County’s issuance of its draft Study as well as notice of when the draft Study is scheduled to be complete.

Many people were surprised at the number of people who attended the LRPC meeting. There was a record attendance at AHCA when this project was brought up as well. *Record meeting attendance is because this project is an issue that the stakeholders in the neighborhood oppose by a wide margin due to the precedent it sets, and the extensive irreversible damage it will do to the small scale historic neighborhood with its size and scale.* The staff presentation did not adequately address these concerns.

Questions:

SPECIAL GLUP PROCESS

- 1) As stated at the LRPC meeting we have concerns over the special GLUP process, and we request the county respond to these concerns. Specifically, please advise how the process conforms to Virginia zoning law given that this process (per the 2019 brochure) invites developers to request specific upzoning rather than requiring a careful review of any GLUP designation that may need consideration. As highlighted in our previous correspondence, this site does not meet the qualifications for a special GLUP amendment as it falls outside of a sector plan and there has been no unforeseeable, unanticipated planning need.
- 2) When will Arlington County respond to the prior correspondence listed in our LRPC presentation on November 28, 2023 and our comments and questions regarding the “online engagement”? See Attachments for links / copies of unanswered letters.

#### TECHNICAL ZONING ISSUES

- 3) When will Arlington County advise how this upzoning is in keeping with the Crystal City and Pentagon Sector Plan commitments made to protect the integrity of the Aurora Highlands Historic District per letter from AHCA to the Planning Commission November 21, 2023?
- 4) There was little to no discussion or consideration of the finding of the Tier I Study – that “the purpose of the study is to determine what the appropriate GLUP category and potential zoning districts could be.” (Tier I Meeting Summary at p. 3). Now, at Tier II, there is a presumption in the current County study of approval of a change of designation, and a need to rezone to meet Melwood’s proposed density. This presumption is inappropriate as the Tier I required study to determine the appropriate designation *has not yet been conducted*. Melwood’s request for upzoning should be separate and apart from the need to study the site’s current GLUP designation.
  - a. Why does the current GLUP designation, “public,” need to change to a different designation? The designation “public” includes human services, education, and cultural facilities which is consistent with Melwood’s current operations as a horticultural training center. At the time of the 1981 land swap there must have been either an exception, or an agreement that the building would continue to be used for public purposes (cultural services, human services, educational and employment training, polling place, printing for the Civic Association). If there is no exception, please explain why the County is willing to give up this public good now?
  - b. What is the history of the public use expectation in the original land swap, and why is it no longer required? Is it possible for the county to provide copies of the historic and present deeds for the property to confirm there is no covenant on the property? (These are not available on line.)
  - c. If the LRPC is going to operate under the assumption that the GLUP designation must change, why are other designations such as “low” not being considered and discussed? “Low” is more appropriate given the current zoning, the surrounding zoning of the area, and the infrastructure of the area.

## PROGRAM & FINANCING

- 5) The applicant states it will provide 100% affordable housing on the site, and some reserved for people with neurodivergent disabilities, without providing specifics of the program. The applicant is requesting and the County appears to be reviewing the upzoning specifically for this program. Questions:
- a. Is the County reviewing the upzoning for this specific program, or is this a land use change that is separate from the Melwood use? How can the upzoning be for a specific program if there is no “affordable housing” zoning, except as relates to bonus density, which is not under consideration? If it is being considered independent of any potential use by Melwood, specifically what is the rationalization for considering upzoning that is incongruous with the surrounding area?
  - b. It was stated in the LRPC meeting that there will not be a covenant on the property to require affordable housing. How can a decision be made to approve upzoning based on the landowner providing affordable housing unless there is a covenant? And, notwithstanding our concerns that the purpose of the project is being considered, what is to prevent this site from being redeveloped or sold? Note: LIHTC affordability per the Virginia LIHTC Tax Credit Manual 2022 (VLTCM) is only 30 years.
  - c. Melwood has stated they will prioritize people of neurodivergent abilities to live in this center. How are applicants with neurodivergent abilities distinguished from the general population? Does prioritizing this population in a residential building comply with Fair Housing Laws? We would like more information on this program. Is this program being presented as part of the application? Will this building be considered an “Independent Living” or “Assisted Living” or some other specifically defined and recognized program? Please explain.
- 6) The applicant has stated that they can only build a building that includes 100 units to make this planned expansion financially feasible. It is unclear why the building cannot be smaller, as there are many examples of small buildings that are 100% affordable and it is unclear why financing requirements are a land use consideration at all. Questions:
- a. Can the applicant provide specific justification for why 100 units is required in a 100% affordable building? Here is a link to an example 18 unit affordable housing project that just broke ground in DC:

<https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/green-affordable-housing-dc-breaks-ground-on-building/3497963/>

- b. Will Arlington County contribute to the funding of this project? Have there been any discussions about Arlington County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Amazon or other entity providing funding for this project (other than LIHTC)? If Arlington County is contributing or leveraging any public funding, we would like to see the details of the proposed program.

BUILDING MASSING – *notwithstanding the fundamental concerns regarding process, zoning technical issues, program and financing above,*

- 7) Will the County require Melwood to address the concerns regarding parking and traffic given their proposal negates the current parking agreements with the local churches and the currently proposed loading and access occurs on a street that is closed every Sunday for church parking?
- 8) Will the County require a wide biophilic separation between Nellie Custis Park and Melwood per the discussion at the LRPC meeting? We note that there are a number of trees against the north fence in Nellie Custis park that were not included in the original Nellie Custis plans, that will grow to be large trees. The root zone for these trees should be considered in any plans for Melwood upzoning. It did not appear these trees were considered in the massing plan shown at the LRPC meeting.
- 9) The Parks and Recreation Commission was not represented at the LRPC meeting. What is their opinion of the project and its impact on Nellie Custis Park? Previously, at Tier I, Parks and Rec expressed concern about the close adjacency of the large building to the park and pedestrian safety for the children traveling to Nellie Custis Park and Nina Park. How has this concern been addressed in the study?
- 10) There was a presentation at the December 6, 2023 Planning Commission meeting by Mr. Nick Rogers (CPHD), regarding the Public Spaces Master Plan Action Plan. During this presentation Mr. Rogers noted in regards to public spaces at 25:43:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyrQNzh5E-c>

“...with Arlington being a more urbanizing location we do see that demand being met over time more often than not with smaller spaces which will ask much more of us in the coming decades related to needs for natural resources protection and management...keeping in mind there needs to be compatibility with an urbanizing jurisdiction between the activities in the public space and surrounding land uses with particular emphasis on residential neighborhoods”.

No where is this statement more relevant than at Nellie Custis Park. Nellie Custis is a small, hard-working park serving the growing population of 22202: day cares, churches, residents from the apartments and the houses, casual sports, dog walkers, not to mention pollinators, birds and many species of wild animals. More needs to be done to support the multipurpose use and biophilia, not less. Support for these neighborhood parks goes

back to the Crystal City Sector Plan. What is the position of CPHD for the plans that show the proposed upzoning and building looming over this small busy park and no separation?

- 11) There was a presentation at the Crystal and Pentagon Cities Council (CPCC) December 2023 meeting about the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP) by Ryan Delaney, Principal Planner at Arlington County.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQjBqG0vspY>

At around 1:15 in the video Mr. Delaney states the approach to the plan as integrating environmental planning, and “reconnecting nature to daily life”, conservation of resources and quality of life. Aurora Highlands is one of the areas that has the least equity in regard to tree canopy (video 1:23:23 “tree equity score map”). Yet, the GLUP study presented by the county shows taking up the entire lot with building, removing the existing historic evergreen tree, presenting no new areas for planting and looming over Nellie Custis Park in the future root zones of trees recently planted. How does this proposal meet the intent of the FNRP?

- 12) Since the County showed a massing plan that does not work with maintaining the existing school building (except possibly by moving a brick wall as “creatively” suggested by one of the commissioners), does this mean the County does not believe that Nellie Custis School is a historic resource worth saving? If 100 year-old Nellie Custis School and its large evergreen that is the focal point of the annual Miracle on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Celebration is not worth saving, what is worth saving and especially in exchange for a request for upzoning? What is the position of the County and State on Historic Preservation regarding this project? According to the National Register of Historic Places, Nellie Custis School was one of three originally constructed public schools in Arlington County. Below is the link to the 2008 104-page report on the Aurora Highlands Historic District, including Nellie Custis School:

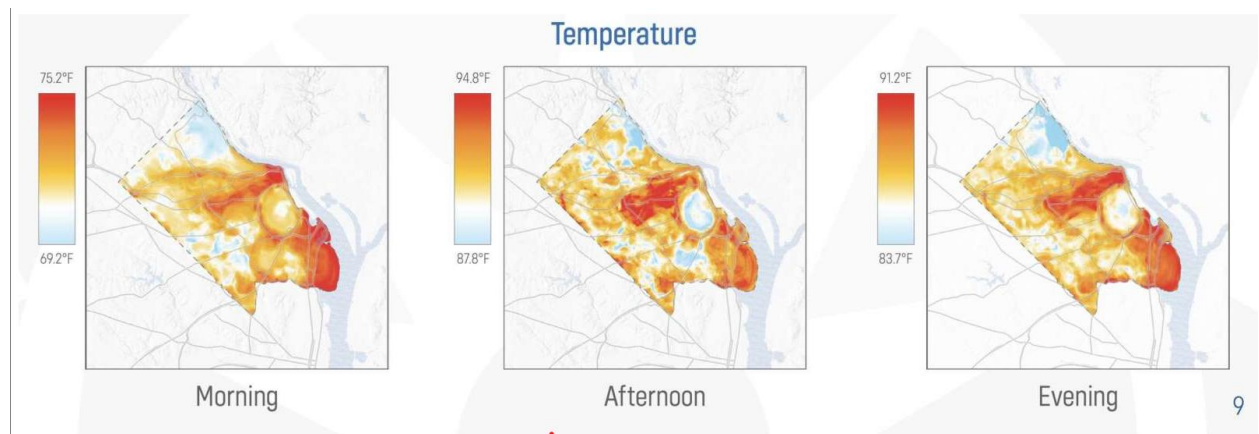
[https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/000-9706\\_Aurora\\_Highlands\\_HD\\_2008\\_NRfinal.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/000-9706_Aurora_Highlands_HD_2008_NRfinal.pdf)

On page 103 you will find a map of the contributing buildings. Unfortunately, Nellie Custis School is the only remaining contributing building on the 700 Block of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Removal of this building will very negatively impact the Historic District, which in addition to being simply “historic” serves as an amenity to the broader community through its historic buildings, small scale, and mature landscaping. People across 22202, renters, office workers and homeowners, enjoy walking and biking on these quaint streets which provide relief from the heavy urban landscape in Crystal City and Pentagon City.

There was no representative from the Arlington County Historic Preservation Commission at the LRPC. What is their position on the county study that shows the removal of the 100 year-old Nellie Custis School and historic evergreen tree?

- 13) The massing plans that showed the tree removal and full coverage of the site is an unfortunate design because in addition, the heat island effect in Aurora Highlands is real as is stormwater management in this low lying area that drains into the Potomac at 4 Mile Run. You can see Aurora Highlands in the map below with heat from the Pentagon / Airport / Crystal City & Pentagon City seeping across and penned in by Arlington Ridge Road and 395. It is about 6 degrees warmer here than in the leafy parts of North Arlington. We need to protect tree canopy, not advocate for its removal. What does the study say about the impact on the heat island effect of this proposed upzoning? What about the increase in non-porous surfaces?

Source: <https://www.arlnow.com/2022/03/31/arlingtons-hottest-areas-lack-tree-canopy-to-soak-up-the-sun-study-finds/>



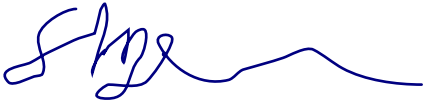
- 14) Has the County studied massing that meets the buildable envelope of C-1/R-6? If not, why not? What size building would the approvable envelope sustain assuming maintenance of the existing historic Nellie Custis School structure? Specifically, can the County provide a reasonable study that includes reasonable assumptions:
- the 35' height limit,
  - the Nellie Custis School and mature trees remaining,
  - the required street setbacks and lot coverage limits per zoning,
  - a 50' wide biophillic separation (e.g. wide enough to support roots of big, tall mature evergreen trees to provide a visual barrier between the building and the park as well as improve the tree canopy and reduce the heat island effect),
  - loading only from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and underground parking,

- f. A parking plan that allows for the churches and commercial buildings to continue their operations without spilling over parking onto the small residential side streets.
- g. Addressing the stormwater issues generated by the site.

Assuming a gross 1,000 SF per apartment, underground parking and approximately 20,000 SF for Melwood's operations, how many units would this envelope net?

We look forward to your response. We invite staff, planning commissioners, and County Board to come tour the site with us at your convenience as well. If anyone is interested please reach out to us.

Sincerely yours,



Stacy Meyer  
LRPC Rep, Melwood GLUP Study  
Vice President, Aurora Highlands Civic Association  
Chair, Aurora Highlands Civic Association Zoning Committee

Cc: Arlington County Board  
Arlington County Planning Commission  
Arlington County Melwood LRPC  
Arlington County Historic Preservation Commission  
Arlington County Parks and Recreation Commission  
Arlington County Forestry and Natural Resources Commission  
Nick Rogers, CPHD  
Ryan Delaney, DPR  
Margaret Tulloch Rhodes, Urban Planner, Arlington County  
Matt Mattauszek, Urban Planner, Arlington County  
Anthony Fusarelli Jr., Planning Director, Arlington County  
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager  
John Ford, President, Arlington County Civic Federation  
Rear Admiral (Ret.) Chris Paul  
Rachel Hicks, President AHCA

**Attachment A - Under separate cover, AHCA November 28, 2023, presentation to LRPC with text notes.**

**Attachment B - Previous (unanswered) Correspondence Links**

- 1) AHCA Letter to County March 22, 2022, regarding Melwood and AHCA Zoning Committee Report:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/assets/public/v/1/ahca-letter-to-county-board-re-melwood-application-22-march-2022.pdf>

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/assets/public/v/1/zoning-committee-report-and-cover-memo-signed-031822.pdf>

- 2) List of Deficiencies in the October 2023 Online Engagement (beginning on Slide 6) in the link attached:

[https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/assets/public/v/1/binder1\\_redacted-updated-11.28.23.pdf](https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/assets/public/v/1/binder1_redacted-updated-11.28.23.pdf)

- 3) Letter from AHCA President Cory Giacobbe November 21, 2023:

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/assets/public/v/1/ahca-letter-on-melwood-21-nov-2023.pdf>



**Attachment C - Unanswered email from AHCA LRPC Rep Stacy Meyer to Mr. Jim Lantelme May 24, 2022 forwarding letter from Rear Admiral Chris Paul Letter to County May 19, 2022 Regarding Melwood LRPC Tier 1 Meeting (not in a link)**

**From:** Stacy Meyer <stacy.meyer@ymail.com>  
**Date:** May 24, 2022 at 5:32:29 PM EDT  
**To:** jatel468@gmail.com  
**Cc:** takis.karantonis@me.com, cdorsey@arlingtonva.us, libbygarvey@gmail.com, mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us, kristol@arlingtonva.us, countyboard@arlingtonva.us, countymanager@arlingtonva.us, Anika Chowdhury <achowdhury@arlingtonva.us>, corygiacobbe@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Melwood GLUP Amendment - LRPC Meeting May 12, 2022 - Aurora Highlands Civic Association  
**Reply-To:** Stacy Meyer <stacy.meyer@ymail.com>

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Dear Mr. Lantelme,

I was the Aurora Highlands Civic Association (AHCA) LRPC Rep for the Melwood project at the May 12 meeting and serve as the Chair of the AHCA Zoning Committee. While we would have preferred to make a presentation, thank you for allowing me to provide a summary of the Zoning Committee's report on the project at the meeting. Attached please find my statement from the meeting and a summary of the AHCA Zoning Committee community survey I referred to **(over 75% of respondents are opposed to the proposed project)**. I am following up on a few items from the LRPC Meeting of May 12, 2022 regarding Melwood:

1. Last week I was copied on the letter below from residents of Aurora Highlands, Rear Admiral Chris Paul and Shannon Paul, forwarding questions from the community in response to the meeting. Can you advise when there will be a response to this letter and who will be responding?

2. AHCA **voted overwhelmingly 6:1 to oppose the project** and approve the Zoning Committee report on Melwood and sent to the Planning Commission, the County Board and to County Staff in March, 2022, and *has not yet received a response*. Can you please let us know when the civic association might receive a response to the letter from the Planning Commission, and who would respond? The report can be found on the AHCA website:

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://aurorahighlands.org/wp-content/uploads/Letter-to-County-re-Melwood-application.docx.pdf

3. I wanted to also follow up on a question I posed at the LRPC. If the project was rejected for Tier 2, could the developer resubmit the application with a design that has the community's support? As per the survey the current proposal does not have much community support, and that is likely since the applicant did not ask for nor incorporate any of the community's concerns (as indicated in the survey) into the application. It seems to be a better outcome if the community and applicant could work collaboratively on a solution. Do you agree? Can you explain why community support a requirement of the GLUP Amendment process that propors to seek it?

4. What is the timing and the process going forward? When will a decision be made (or has it been made already?) about a Tier 2 review?

5. Some in the community have suggested the area needs a "small area plan" - with your experience with the Langston Boulevard Alliance (re: your presentation at the Arlington Civic Federation May 10, 2022), could you meet with AHCA to understand what options are available to the community to continue to protect the historic small scale of the neighborhood? What is your availability to discuss this?

Thank-you,

Sincerely yours,

Stacy Meyer

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Chris Paul <chrispaul08@gmail.com>

**To:** jatel468@gmail.com <jatel468@gmail.com>

**Cc:** takis.karantonis@me.com <takis.karantonis@me.com>; cdorsey@arlingtonva.us <cdorsey@arlingtonva.us>; libbygarvey@gmail.com <libbygarvey@gmail.com>; mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us <mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us>; kcristol@arlingtonva.us <kcristol@arlingtonva.us>; countyboard@arlingtonva.us <countyboard@arlingtonva.us>; countymanager@arlingtonva.us <countymanager@arlingtonva.us>; stacy.meyer@ymail.com <stacy.meyer@ymail.com>; alxfdz@gmail.com <alxfdz@gmail.com>; corygiacobbe@gmail.com <corygiacobbe@gmail.com>; blairr0366@gmail.com <blairr0366@gmail.com>; jill230@gmail.com <jill230@gmail.com>; bendeanne@verizon.net <bendeanne@verizon.net>; alicusick@gmail.com <alikusick@gmail.com>; scott101010@gmail.com

<scott101010@gmail.com>; jhschaus@protonmail.com <jhschaus@protonmail.com>; Shannon Scott <shannon@obrienllc.com>; ChrisPaul08@gmail.com <chrispaul08@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 19, 2022, 04:06:29 PM EDT

**Subject:** Letter to Chairman of the Arlington County Long Range Planning Committee  
Re: Melwood Expansion Project in Aurora Hills cdorsey@arlingtonva.us  
libbygarvey@gmail.com mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us kcristol@arlingtonva.us  
countyboard@arlingtonva.us countyman...

Dear Chairman Lantelme,

Our names are Christopher and Shannon Paul and we participated in the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) virtual meeting regarding the Melwood project on May 12, 2022. We have lived in Aurora Highlands since 2010. When I chose to retire from the U.S. Navy and my United States Senate position, we had made the decision to build a new home in the Aurora Hills neighborhood. Our decision was carefully considered as we examined several communities based on a long list of things we found desirable and would be enjoyable for our family of four.

As a retired Flag Officer who spent a great deal of effort during my career working with the communities surrounding our military bases in the United States and overseas I was particularly disturbed by how the Melwood expansion project meeting was conducted. For example, certain Commissioners were dismissive of Aurora Hills citizens and were at times hostile toward our community members. In addition, citizens of Aurora Hills were only allowed to speak for 60 seconds compared to Commissioners and other guest speakers that were allowed to voice their opinions about a neighborhood most do not live in. Not all the County speakers were subject matter experts for a meeting that was publicly designated as a community zoning meeting.

This proposal, for a large 100-unit multifamily building, will alter the scale of the neighborhood for our residents forever. As you know, it would seriously encroach a neighborhood that was designed for and has been deliberately preserved by City and County leaders for years as one of the last single family neighborhoods left in this area. Implications that we simply do not want this project "in our backyard" are unfair, untrue, and inappropriate given that the Crystal City, Pentagon City, and National Landing neighborhoods, which are appropriately aligned for this type of development, are in fact "in our backyard".

We already deal with the traffic and density impacts of our greater surrounding neighborhoods on a daily basis, but made a conscious decision to live in and

invest in this community because of the value single family neighborhoods bring to areas like ours—often cited by *Forbes*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *AARP.com*, *smartasset.com*, *Niche.com*, *Livability.com*, etc. There have been many opportunities for development projects of this scope, height, density, and objective to be incorporated into the thousands of new high-rise units that have been approved and are planned in the Crystal City, Pentagon City, and National Landing areas mere blocks away.

We encourage our City and County leaders to examine why more hasn't been done to require this of our large developers building in our greater community and whether more should be done to address opportunities in areas that are designed for this type of large development project. For these reasons, many of us who live in Aurora Hills found the process regarding the proposed zoning and building expansion to be lacking substantial community comment and indifferent and often hostile to the input of many of Aurora Hills' citizens of which this proposed zoning change will ultimately impact.

Mr. Chairman, I have been forwarded questions from the Aurora Hills community at large that are clearly a reaction to the meeting you chaired on May 12, 2022. I respectfully request that you respond to the below questions from the greater Aurora Hills community. I have also been asked to request your response to the letter the Aurora Hills Civic Association (AHCA) sent in March 2022.

While we did not write the enclosed questions, we do believe they deserve to be responded to by Arlington County public officials, who by the office they hold on the LRPC, are supposed to represent or communicate with Arlington County's citizens. Thank you for your consideration of our request and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely, Chris

RADM Christopher J. Paul, USN (Ret.)

Mrs. Shannon Paul

Aurora Hills Citizen Questions

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1). Staff presentations during the LRPC Melwood project meeting were supposed to be about studying zoning; however, there is no zoning for affordable housing in the Melwood application except for bonus density to double the height/density, yet there were several affordable housing advocates seated at the table—the Housing Commission, the Disabilities Commission, a Melwood Client, etc. Do you agree that the proposed use as affordable housing is not a zoning issue, except in considering bonus density, and that multifamily is the zoning issue here? If so, why was the discussion of affordable housing a major topic in the LRPC meeting on May 12, 2022? Please explain.

2). Many Aurora Hills community members pointed out in the 60 seconds they were given to comment that a Commission decision appeared to have already been reached in advance of the meeting in favor of Melwood especially given certain Commissioner attendance—non zoning expert advocates. Please comment on why there were so many housing advocates in attendance rather than such limited neighborhood community representation? Is this in keeping with the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Amendment that requires “full community input”? Shouldn’t the Aurora Hills residents most impacted—adjacent citizen neighbors be most represented as is allowed in the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) process? Please explain.

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3). The adjacent residential neighbors were not included in the longer period discussion, yet the owner of the commercial property adjacent to the Melwood project was invited as well as a Melwood client? Please explain why this occurred in the meeting agenda as it suggests a biased or tainted community process.

4). Two Commissioners inappropriately accused neighbors of being prejudiced against all affordable housing “in their neighborhood”. Do you believe this should have occurred especially during a community meeting and in hindsight should you have criticized this type of rhetoric by public officials/Commissioners as the Committee Chairman? Are these kinds of attacks normal for the LRPC? Please explain.

5). LRPC meeting presentations by staff were fallacious as demonstrated by the power point materials that were transmitted during the community meeting. For example, the staff report omitted pertinent information such as nearly half of the site is currently zoned R-6 residential—a fundamental consideration in the application. Revising an R-6 to R-8-18 sets a precedent for other developers or private industry seeking to rezone single family homes through this process. The meeting’s presentation was so confusing that Ms. Rhodes wrongly stated that only Parcel B is R-6. Statements suggesting that Parcel B is designated R-6 when both Parcel B and Parcel A are within R-6 zoning was incorrect and misleading. Do you agree and should Commissioners

have identified that mistake and immediately corrected it? Please explain.

6). The Crystal City Sector Plan which enjoys community support because it was developed via a collaborative approach with the neighborhood, and was approved in 2010 and intended to guide development through 2040 called as one of its primary goals protection of the scale of the single family neighborhood (this is also a goal of the County). Do you agree that the Crystal City Sector Plan is relevant, and that the primary goals should be guiding principles in the GLUP Amendment since they address the Aurora Hills neighborhood? Please explain.

7). There was no acknowledgement of the letter AHCA sent to staff, the Planning Commission and the County Board stating its overwhelming opposition to the Melwood project proposal in the report because of its size and height, traffic and safety concerns, etc. The report is available online: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/<https://aurorahighlands.org/wp-content/uploads/AHCAZC-Memo-Re-South-Eads-and-CCHS-22.04.29V2-signed.pdf>. Would you please comment on why Arlington staff chose to not mention the Aurora Hills Civic Association (AHCA) letter in their presentations and why this critical community letter was omitted from the prepared materials? Do you know if there has been a response to this letter? Will there be a response and when?

8). During the meeting Commissioners and staff raised The Affordable Housing Master Plan, even though it is not relevant to this particular zoning case, and there is no mention of The Affordable Housing Master Plan map, and that this location is well outside of the areas designated for affordable housing. Furthermore, what was not mentioned by the staff, is that Aurora Highlands already has one of the highest levels of food insecurity in the County, and its high school, Wakefield, the highest level of free and reduced lunch. Do you agree that “equitability” which was included as the lens in which the Melwood application is viewed in the presentation means affordable housing should be targeted to the high opportunity areas of central and north Arlington—not all clustered in South Arlington? Can you please advise on the County’s position on this?

9). The presentation spoke to Historic Preservation and in the same slide dismisses it as being balanced with growth, without explaining what that means. It spoke to the school building itself but ignored the neighborhood’s historic scale. Can you clarify what historic preservation

means if it doesn't mean the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods? Aurora Hills is a designated historic neighborhood. Is that meaningful to the LRPC as it is to the Aurora Hills citizens? Please explain.

10). Why was the Crystal City Heights Study included if it is irrelevant to the application and incomplete? Please explain.

11). The Livability Action Plan was referenced during the LRPC meeting but the presentation failed to include that first and foremost that Livability22202 seeks to "leverage existing County plans and commit to a collaborative process". It appears to Aurora Hills citizens that the staff presentations chose to cherry pick out of the Livability22202 presentation to a predetermined end. Do you agree with this statement? If not why not. Please explain your answer.

12). When these questions about the Melwood expansion meeting and the presentation are considered together, do you agree they appear to present a skewed approach towards the Melwood project at the expense of the neighborhood that has stated it opposes the project due to the density and scale? Please explain how this is an example of resident based, bottom up planning?

13). During the meeting it was mentioned that there was a survey by the Zoning Committee of AHCA that more than 75 percent of the people surveyed opposed the project. Do you think more outreach to the neighbors should have been done as part of the Tier 1 review by staff and/or the applicant to understand the neighborhood's position on this expansion project? Please explain.

14). During the meeting Commissioners repeatedly suggested they could reduce the size or include setbacks to the project or even create covenants in Tier 2, but it is unclear if the applicant can accept that or what impact remains on the neighbors. Why should Commissioners, most who do not live in the Aurora Hills neighborhood be able to dictate what is built in this neighborhood? Furthermore, has anyone considered that Melwood may (and will likely) claim they cannot do a smaller project for financial or operational reasons? Why is it not a reasonable request to move this project to a Tier 2 review as that is the standard in the BZA process? It would be a much more inclusive and collaborative if the applicant were made to obtain neighborhood approval prior to submitting an application. What is different here, except that there is much more at stake than a building eave protruding one foot over a setback line? Please explain.

15). Please address the precedent that the Melwood project sets to all single family neighborhoods across Arlington County if rezoning single family to multifamily is allowed to move forward without substantial community citizen input? Has that impact been studied by the LRPC or the County? There are already two GLUP applications in Aurora Hills given this new process instituted in 2019. Please comment.

Attachment 1: LRPC Meeting AHCA Statement:

- Good evening, my name is Stacy Meyer, I am chair of the AHCA Zoning Committee which Thank you for allowing me to present highlights that came out of the Zoning Committee's review of the

Melwood GLUP Amendment Application and our review of the Staff Report that is now posted online.

We used to have a real planning and engagement process, the Crystal City Sector Plan which was approved in 2010 and was anticipated to be the framework for the Crystal City's growth through 2040, had ground rules, shared values and over 90 community meetings. But since the HQ2 announcement it seems the County is moving forward in ways that are designed more to simply check the box of community engagement in 22202.

I would like to comment on the GLUP Amendment Process . The staff report presumes that the GLUP Amendment process is the default process for upzoning- meaning, anyone who applies, gets in, unless they fall under some other process for upzoning. However, that is not in keeping with the 2008 legislation regarding GLUP Amendments. Per the 2008 legislation, Arlington County Zoning and the GLUP as planned are THE tools for planning and for providing predictability to the community in planning and growth. Individual amendments to the GLUP are therefore intended to be the exception and not the rule. Per the legislation " Item 4: "Amending the GLUP without...understanding whether it comports with the County's long term planning goals...and obtaining full input from...the community, disservices, and may result in decisions contrary to the county's planning principles".

However, the GLUP Amendment process for this application has failed to c

The exception and not the rule. Two months after the HQ2 announcement, in 2019 the brochure now available online was published on the GLUP amendment process. The brochure invites anyone wishing to amend their zoning to apply. Now there are currently two proposed GLUP amendments being proposed in Aurora Highlands and



another 4 in other parts of the County for a total of 6, versus a total 8 over the previous 11 years from 2008 to 2019. The community is now being put in the position of having to defend its 100 year plus history as a single family neighborhood from anyone that decides to submit a GLUP amendment application.

As was the case prior to 2019, the GLUP Amendment process should be limited to very select one-off circumstances to comply with the intention of the 2008 legislation. For this reason alone this application should not be approved for Tier 2 review. Please tell us, if this project is not rejected for Tier 2, what project not a part of another planning process would ever be rejected? What does that mean for our community?

I would like to comment on the Staff Report . The staff report appears to be crafted with selections to meet a predetermined end, that of moving the project forward. There are numerous deficiencies. The staff report does not acknowledge the Aurora Highland Civic Association's letter to the County sent in March of 2022. It does not acknowledge that the community voted overwhelmingly to oppose the GLUP amendment. Additionally, there has been no response from the County Staff, the Planning Commission or the County Board to the letter in nearly two months.

Neither of the two adjacent neighbors are invited to the LRPC table, yet the owner of the Commercial Building is invited. This disservices the planning process and is not in keeping with the 2008 legislation.

Restaurant Row and the Churches are notified yet the nearby neighbors are not notified. Why? This appears to be a crafted approach to minimize neighbor input. What is the purpose of not engaging neighbors when the intent of the process as laid out is to obtain full input from the community? And to weigh that input seriously.

The staff report notes there are no plans for additional public uses on the block – yet the building is uniquely suited to being a small school because that is what it was designed to be. And there is no debate that schools are needed in the area. The building and site on the other hand are not suited for the multifamily housing proposed.

To be clear, Parcel A spans C2 and R6 zoning. It is not just the Parcel B that is R-6.

The slide titled GLUP Booklet Development and Growth Goals has selected quotes but does not include preservation of the single-family neighborhoods as a goal which has been a fundamental zoning principle of the county for decades.

The slide titled Affordable Housing Master Plan fails to acknowledge there is a map where affordable housing is intended to be. Per the AHCA Zoning Committee report, the site is well outside of the mapped area.

The report speaks to equity, but there is far more affordable housing in South Arlington and in 22202 than in other high opportunity locations including the Yorktown and Washington Liberty School Districts.

Aurora Highlands already has one of the highest levels of food insecurity in the county per a recent report by the Arlington Food Assistance Center, at over 14% and Wakefield has the highest level of subsidized lunches at 41%. The need to create equity in affordable housing and opportunity means more new affordable housing opportunities should be equitably located in high opportunity locations in close walking distance to metro and grocery. This site is at least a mile from either.

- The slide titled Historic Preservation Master Plan fails to acknowledge that Aurora Highlands is a designated historic neighborhood and fails to recognize the goal of preservation of the historic residential scale of the community. The slide titled Livability Action Plan fails to include the fundamental premise of the Livability 22202 initiative which first and foremost seeks to leverage existing county plans and commit to a collaborative process.

It is unclear why the slide titled Additional Planning Guidance regarding the changes contemplated as part of the Crystal City Heights study is included at all. The site is well outside of the bounds of the Crystal City Heights study.

The Staff Recommendation states the site is located in an unplanned area. How is that possible when the site has been zoned C-2 and R-6 for decades. The only thing unplanned about the area now is this proposed GLUP amendment.

The Amendment - The proposed amendment is out of scale with the neighborhood and inappropriate in this location. The proposed zoning is for a 60' tall building but would even allow for a 120' tall building if affordable housing.

The proposal is not in keeping with the Crystal City Sector Plan, which proposed tapering Crystal City buildings and keeping the residential scale of the neighborhood. It is not in keeping with the Neighborhood Conservation Plan which states the existing scale of should be maintained. It is outside the mapped area in the Affordable Housing Master Plan.

The applicant states the project will generate over 235 car trips per day onto the residential streets. Parking is also not addressed including church parking for the Latter Day Saints who park in the Melwood lot, and Calvery Methodist who closes the adjacent Grant Street on Sundays for parking

The AHCA voted overwhelmingly by 6 to 1 to oppose the proposed amendment in a meeting with record attendance. An online survey conducted by the AHCA Zoning Committee revealed that over 75% the 152 respondents oppose the proposed project. The top concerns were, not surprisingly, the size and scale of the building, the precedent being created, traffic, parking and lack of community input.

This is an important meeting, and this is a very important decision for all of us. Before us is a proposal that seriously encroaches into the single-family neighborhood with a

large 100-unit multifamily building which will alter the scale of the neighborhood for the residents forever.