

ARLINGTON COUNTY
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414

Arlington, Virginia 22201

March 17, 2021

Honorable Matt de Ferranti
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Crystal City Water Park

Dear Chair de Ferranti:

The Park and Recreation Commission has received a briefing on the Crystal City Water Park project and has participated in discussions with other commissions, civic associations and the applicant. We appreciate the County Board's January deferral on this project that allowed additional public engagement and comment. We believe that minor site plan amendments that involve significant changes in the layout or use of public open space should all at least have the Communicate and Consult form of Engagement. We ask that the County Manager to direct staff in the future to work more closely with advisory commissions on such proposals.

The commission's major comments and concerns have revolved around the ongoing challenges to natural open space in this part of Arlington. We support the detailed analysis and sentiments expressed by the contributions of the Livability22202 group.

We have expressed concerns about the proposed retail additions and how they will impose on one of the few remaining natural open spaces in the Crystal City area. We still wonder about the year-round consistency and viability of these kiosks and have suggested the alternative of well-designed temporary or mobile kiosks that would allow JBG to offer flexible retail programs.

Nevertheless, the applicant has produced several improvements to the design, which includes several good biophilic design themes such as the introduction of more curvilinear features and the breaking up of some of the existing hardscape areas. And we appreciate the discussions among pedestrian and bicycle commissions, the applicant, and staff to improve on the important, non-car transportation features of this site.

On the water feature, we have suggested a more biophilic, natural look perhaps something with a rockier mountain stream-like design. Such an approach would be more in line with other recent Crystal City area Virginia-themed proposals such as for Met Park, Pen Place, and the New

(Teardrop) Park. The opportunity to provide a common design theme (with creative variations) appears to be missed in some respects. A more naturalistic design would have a better chance of not appearing out of date look in a few years and would be more attractive during Winter months when the water feature is not operational.

Finally, we note that a significant number of established large or medium-sized trees will be taken out and we urge that ongoing planning and design take this into account, as well as considerations for survivable tree species, planting strip width, and soil volume.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William N. Ross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and a distinct "N" and "R".

William Ross
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