

From: [Scott Sklar](#)
To: [CountyBoard](#); [Matt de Ferranti](#); [Katie Cristol](#); [Christian Dorsey](#); [Takis Karantonis](#); [Libby Garvey](#)
Cc: [CountyManager](#); [Anthony Fusarelli Jr](#); [Parks And Recreation](#); [Brett Wallace](#); [JM Schroll](#); [jatel](#); [wwross53@gmail.com](#); [info@nvct.org](#); [LyonParkPresident@gmail.com](#); [gicarten@verizon.net](#); [president@clarendoncourthouseva.org](#); [info@ballstoncivic.org](#); [henry@staplessolutions.com](#); [spillsburyj@gmail.com](#)
Subject: Joint 5 Civic Assn letter on Clarendon Sector planning process led by the County's Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) - Sklar (AHCA)
Date: Thursday, December 23, 2021 7:17:31 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL

December 23, 2021

To: Members of the Arlington County Board

From:

Ashton Heights Civic Association
Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association
Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association
Lyon Park Citizens Association
Lyon Village Citizens Association

Dear members of the board, this joint letter represents all five civic associations that have officially participated in the Clarendon Sector planning process led by the County's Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). We are providing this joint statement to impress upon you the importance of our request.

Our five civic associations request that the Updated Clarendon Sector Plan should retain the importance of realizing approximately 50,000 square feet of contiguous park space on the County-owned site on 10th Street. With planned construction in Clarendon shifting from office to residential buildings, along with increased FAR on many parcels, many more people are, and will continue, to call Clarendon home. Larger numbers of residents mean an even greater need for local recreation space than envisioned in the 2006 Sector Plan.

Accordingly, our associations strongly oppose the land-use scenarios presented in the December 1, 2021 Clarendon Sector Plan Update document (p. 9) -- as well as any updates to the 2006 Plan -- that would eliminate the planned park on 10th Street, and change the land use designation for this County-owned site, including the Fire Station property, from park to another use such as residential.

While relocating the fire station to a nearby parcel has been presented as an option, the conclusion drawn from the LRPC discussion is that this may not be feasible. In this case, our associations request that creative solutions be found to provide substantial recreation space, while upgrading the fire station on its

current site. We do not support losing one essential community need in favor of the other essential community need. For this reason, we believe redevelopment of the Firehouse should be planned in conjunction with the future park, ensuring that both needs are properly met.

Towards that end, we believe that a rebuilt fire station on that site, with an indoor multipurpose athletic facility on the top floor, in combination with the adjacent outdoor Clarendon House site, could provide an ideal park/athletic facility for Clarendon. In addition, the fire station is important to our residents who value the quick response time the current facility provides. We note that roof utilization is included in the County Board-approved Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP). Thus, the new park would include both the ground level space, as well as the top of the Fire Station, and potentially provide both outdoor and indoor park space. In combination, it would approximate the 50,000 square foot of park space envisioned there in the 2006 Clarendon Sector Plan, and this would offer amenities for a diverse population from young to old, including both those looking for a quiet place to relax and for active exercise opportunities.

We laid out our vision for the outdoor space in a letter that three of our associations sent to the County Board last summer. While recognizing that the park planning process would determine the particulars, our letter urged a creative exploration of options to capitalize fully on this County-owned public space. We expressed support for a tot lot, seating area (with trees), and active space like a basketball, pickle ball, and/or other active use there.

At the December 8 LRPC meeting, we reaffirmed that position and laid out additional ideas on how redevelopment of the fire station could enhance recreational space by locating active, 12-month recreation space in a multi-use space on the top of the building. For instance, it could provide space for indoor basketball, volleyball, a possible running track, and other active uses year-round, something that Clarendon lacks. Access could be by a stairway and elevator on the building exterior, with the fire station in a position to control access. The space also could be used by the fire station for training, instruction, and workouts for fire and rescue personnel. It is our hope that a continued commitment for fire house use on this site would accelerate plans to modernize the station and to incorporate a recreational facility as an integral part of the future park on that block.

Consistent with our position, we endorse the November 26 letter to the County Board from the Forestry and Natural Resources Commission (FNRC), which makes a compelling case -- with accompanying data -- affirming the need to fulfil the County's commitment to provide this public space. The FNRC underscores that this objective was reaffirmed in the PSMP adopted by the County Board in 2019. As the FNRC letter concludes:

“To plan for significant increase in density without the concomitant increase in both the quantity and quality of public spaces, is a lost

opportunity and a disservice to the notion of planning for a sustainable, healthy and livable environment for residents and workers."

Our five civic associations believe that realizing this public space will be essential to the continued success of Clarendon as an urban village, especially as we increase the number of new residents. We urge that financial support for the planned park be prioritized as the most significant public benefit to be sought from developers in exchange for bonus density requested in their existing or future site plan proposals. We would likewise encourage developer support for a County-directed effort to design, fund, and develop this proposed recreational space.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Signatories:

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