

Community Association of Spring Hill (CASH)

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Subject: Comments from CASH on the Alexander Company Revised Master Plan for the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area

Chris, thanks for attending the CASH meeting on 28 May 2009 on the subject of the Revised Master Plan for the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area dated Spring 2009. Your comments and assistance provided us with greater insight and background.

This letter provides the County and Alexander Company with comments, questions, concerns, and recommendations from a Spring Hill Community perspective. CASH members reached consensus on the overarching issues listed below. *We hope that the County and the Alexander Company will heavily weigh our concerns and recommendations, since we are the neighborhood most affected by decisions regarding the Adaptive Reuse Area.*

A. Penitentiary Wall. The revised master plan shows the retention of the penitentiary wall between Spring Hill and the Adaptive Reuse Area. CASH members support retention of the wall as depicted in the revised master plan. However, we do **not** support direct pedestrian access to Spring Hill from the Adaptive Reuse Area. Spring Hill residents will enter the Adaptive Reuse Area through the openings used by non-Spring Hill residents.

B. Towers. CASH members are not supportive of the tower tours idea and are concerned about the potential intrusion on Spring Hill and its residents. Should the County decide to implement public tours of the penitentiary towers, CASH members strongly recommend that the County limit these tours to Towers P-08 and R-54 (towers 5 and 1). This would minimize the potential intrusion to Spring Hill residents.

C. Multi-Use Retail Pad. CASH members unanimously recommend that the Alexander Company remove the proposed retail pad site bounded by Silverbrook Road, White Spruce and the penitentiary wall from the next version of the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area Master Plan. Traffic generated by a retail business would further complicate an already problematic intersection that will be shared by Spring Hill residents and patrons of the retail area inside the wall. Spring Hill residents also believe that any structure on the proposed retail pad site will be too intrusive and that it will hide the penitentiary wall and will potentially obstruct motorist's view of the retail space. The concept of opening sections of the wall to attract customers is therefore compromised if a building is placed in front of the main retail area.

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D. Baseball Field. CASH members strongly support the conversion of the current baseball field into a central multi-purpose green park as currently depicted in the revised master plan. We are concerned that the retention of the ball field could generate a negative impact and jeopardize the economic viability of the overall plan for the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area.

- The next version of the master plan, however, should include information on other alternatives for a 90-foot baseball field for the South County Hawks.
- CASH members recognize that retention of the baseball field represents an emotional and important issue for the 38 baseball players and their families who use and maintain the field. However, the players and the South County Hawks should *not* serve as the “salamander” that prevents the implementation of the master plan presented by the Alexander Company.

E. Housing. CASH members agree that the revised master plan should include greater creativity in the type of housing units, such as the garden homes, 4-plex villas, and single-family homes in the Spring Hill community. CASH members expressed concern about the limited space allocated for homeowner parking, as well as overflow parking for visitors. The master plan should address the parking issue.

CASH members recommend that the revised master plan also address the following points:

- Include a working definition of “magnet” or “workforce” housing, including income guidelines and how long an individual or family can reside in one of the units. For example, are individuals ineligible once they complete their police cadet training program or achieve a certain pay level?
- Define who is eligible to live in the magnet housing units, including types of County workers who are eligible. For example, instructional assistants, library aides, and administrative secretaries. CASH members strongly encourage the County to provide magnet or workhouse housing to any county worker who qualifies. *We hope that the income guidelines will permit County policemen, firemen, and teachers, as well as nurses and other medical personnel within the Inova system to take advantage of the magnet or workforce housing.*
- Define the size of families who can reside in magnet housing units.
- State who will own the apartment units and who will be responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and the grounds.
- State that residents within the Adaptive Reuse Area will *not* have pedestrian access to the Spring Hill community.
- State the estimate of impact on potential increase of student population.

F. Traffic. The revised master plan should include a heavy emphasis on the impact of increased traffic into the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area via the entrance off White Spruce Way, a roadway which currently serves as one of two entrances into the gated Spring Hill community. The plan should also identify

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potential problems associated with any of the three planned entrances to the Adaptive Reuse Area.

G. Landscaping and Screening. CASH members still have concerns about parts of the Adaptive Reuse Area that are not screened by the penitentiary wall. CASH recommends that Alexander Company add dense landscaping between Spring Hill and the reformatory or provide an alternative in order to avoid a view of the back of buildings and a parking lot. *Note: At least three of the single-story independent living Kettler-owned buildings are separated from the reformatory and the current baseball field by only the Greenway - an area the County is currently not maintaining on a regular basis.*

H. Lighting. Parking lot lights in the Adaptive Reuse Area must blend into the area and not appear as "football stadium type lights." Retail and office area lighting should **not** have a negative impact on Spring Hill.

I. Building Height. The next version of the master plan should include the maximum height for new buildings in the Adaptive Reuse Area. Spring Hill residents strongly support building heights that are compatible with adjacent areas.

J. Types of Retail. CASH members hope they will have a strong say in the types of retail included in the Adaptive Reuse Area. *This is not a topic that county residents who do not live in the area should dictate to the residents of Spring Hill.* Another important concern to Spring Hill residents is the retail signs. Any large roadside sign would be out of place in this historic location; all retail signs should be compatible with the historic theme and not be obtrusive.

CASH members recommend that the next version of the master plan provide specifics in explaining what "mixed use" means regarding retail applications.

We hope that our comments, concerns, questions, and recommendations will assist the County and the Alexander Company in transforming the Adaptive Reuse Area into an economically viable and successful project that will benefit not only the adjacent communities, but will enhance the reputation of Fairfax County overall. Thank you for allowing us to participate in the process.



Dale Johnson
President, CASH