



LAUREL HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

8380 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton, VA 22079

July 15, 2009

Supervisor Gerry Hyland
Mount Vernon Governmental Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306

Dear Supervisor Hyland:

As the duly elected Members of the Board of Directors for Laurel Hill, the largest community adjoining the former Lorton prison site, we are writing to express our opposition to the current draft of the master plan for the Laurel Hill adaptive reuse area.

While we are supportive of most of the land use recommendations contained in the master plan being proposed by the Alexander Company, we cannot support moving forward with this proposal at this time because of the flawed financing scheme that is being proposed.

Specifically, we do not support the heavy reliance on federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits; we question the unsubstantiated and overly optimistic estimates of historic preservation tax credits; and we have serious doubts about the level of financial contribution that the County will ultimately be able to afford at a time when the County's budget imbalance is projected to be up to \$1 billion over the next two years.

In particular, we do not support the proposal to seek \$6.1 million in federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to subsidize what was planned to be magnet or workforce housing to assist certain County workers – such as police, firefighters and teachers – who otherwise may not be able to afford to live in Fairfax County. The inclusion of magnet/workforce housing was supported by Laurel Hill, unanimously recommended by the Citizens Task Force, adopted by the Board of Supervisors and supported by the South County Federation. However, by seeking federal low-income housing tax credits, we believe that the County would not be able to reserve these units for County workers, nor could they establish income limits above the federal low-income guidelines, effectively changing this into just another low-income housing program.

If the \$6.1 million in federal low-income housing subsidies are dropped, the County's estimated financial participation could grow to \$15 or \$18 million; and if the historic preservation tax credits fall short, the cost to the County could rise to \$20 or even \$25 million. Unless we know that the County government is willing and able to make this level of financial contribution, it would be irresponsible to support or move forward with this plan at this time.

However, since the adaptive reuse of the former Lorton prison is a very high priority for the 3,000 residents of Laurel Hill, we have been and remain committed to finding a compromise solution that reasonably balances the competing demands of historic preservation, community preference and economic viability and sustainability.

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In this regard, we do support the recommended land use mix of retail, commercial and residential, including the construction of new residential units. We also support the plan's proposal to create a multi-use public green space at the current ball field location provided another suitable ball field in this area is secured. We believe that this solution would be a win-win situation for the local community that would not only gain a central green space for public events, but would also provide a new ball field that could be used by the entire community.

We also strongly support the plan's proposal to remove portions of the penitentiary wall in order to open up the site to public view and thereby encourage people into the site. This will not only help promote economic success for new businesses interested in locating at this site, it will also create better opportunities for citizens to see, learn about and appreciate the unique history of the former Lorton prison complex.

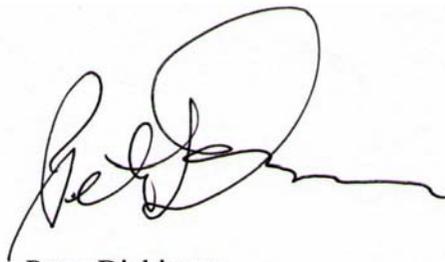
Finally, we do want to bring to your attention serious concerns about the impact this project would have on traffic in this area. We question whether earlier assessments that concluded that the traffic impact based on the redevelopment of the prison site would be minimal. Lorton Road today is backed up in the mornings from I-95 to Silverbrook Road and the housing and other development increase in the plan will almost certainly lead to additional traffic problems at this and other nearby roads and intersections. We believe it is imperative that the traffic impact study be redone and funding for any anticipated road improvements be identified now to prepare to mitigate future problems.

The success of the adaptive reuse process for the former Lorton prison site is of paramount importance to Laurel Hill, and we stand ready to work with you and others in a spirit of community and compromise to create something that we can all be proud of.

Respectfully,



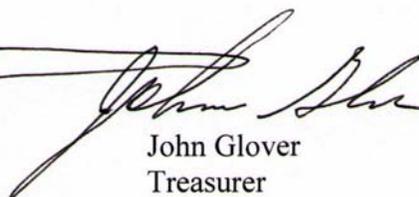
Peter Meincke
President



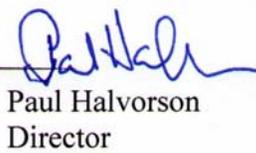
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