

Statement of Marion Stillson, as an individual (3 minutes)

Town Center Committee, RMPSTF, August 17, 2010

My name is Marion Stillson. I have lived in Reston for thirty years. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

First, I would like to discuss your section, "Items Not Addressed." It is not as clear to me as it is to the Committee that an 'infrastructure needs assessment' is beyond your scope. Certainly the Committee cannot be responsible for adding the infrastructure needs of other Committees to its own needs: only the full Task Force can do that. However, declining to consider infrastructure needs of just the Town Center (which obviously IS within your purview) takes you off the hook for considering the difficult problems of implementation, phasing and financing. "In the beginning" when Bob Simon started Reston, he owned everything. This minimized the problems of implementation, phasing and financing. We are not in that situation now. Virginia land use law applicable to multiple owners seems calculated to thwart town planning at every turn. The result in my view is that the Committee, like other Committees, MUST consider the impact of its own recommendations and suggest some ways to implement them. I urge the Committee to turn its ingenuity explicitly to the problems of infrastructure needs and provision.

I am concerned that the Committee does not place enough emphasis on open space. I would like to see you set a minimum percentage of open/green space which is higher than the minima set by Fairfax County. Reston is famous for open space! Then perhaps you need to recommend mechanisms for the protection of suitable land, so that it is not diverted to other uses.

No mention is made of places of worship, and not much of public art. Regarding art, I commend to you Guy Rando's recent document which proposes a contest for a public art trail in Town Center. You do not mention affordable housing. Housing for all income levels was a founding principle of Reston and still is.

Thank you for considering Embry Rucker shelter: perhaps Reston should be home in addition to another shelter, for single men, along the lines of the Kate Hanley shelter elsewhere in Fairfax County. This might solve some of the homelessness which is currently hidden in Reston's woods, but which might become more obvious in an enlarged Town Center. You do not mention amenities for our aging population, such as visitable housing (which I described elsewhere). Why not make Reston Town Center a showcase in Fairfax County for visitable housing?

Thank you for all the exciting projects you have envisioned. There could be still more.....