

FA

Angela Brackett

From: Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association <president@ballstoncivic.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 06, 2011 8:32 AM
To: Rosemary Ciotti
Cc: Christopher Zimmerman; Mary Hynes
Subject: Virginia Square Towers Site Plan
Attachments: Virginia Square Towers Planning Commissioner Letter.doc

Chair Ciotti,

Please find attached the letter from the Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association regarding the Virginia Square Towers site plan. I have CC'd Chairman Zimmerman and Vice-Chair Hynes on this email, as well. Thank you for allowing our Association to comment on this proposal. I am available for additional comment via email at president@ballstoncivic.org or by phone at 434-825-7591.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

James M. Schroll
President
Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association

CB/FA 377834

September 6, 2011

Arlington County Planning Commission
#1 Courthouse Plaza
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Planning Commissioners:

We would like to thank the Arlington County Board, Planning Commission, and specifically the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) for providing us with four public forums for preliminary discussions on the Virginia Square Towers project. We also wish to thank Dittmar Company and its constituencies for presenting their preliminary site plans, providing additional public forums directly for associations and residents, and for being responsive in making many requested changes during site plan consideration. These meetings were a much needed opportunity for our association to raise community concerns.

During the course of this continued dialogue many of our concerns were echoed by SPRC representatives. Although several matters were resolved as a result of this process, the community continues to have serious concerns regarding the Virginia Square Towers Apartment proposal. Please find below a prioritized list of unresolved community concerns, with potential solutions that correspond to each issue:

Retail Concern

The Dittmar Company's proposal asks for retail/flex space that can be altered to residential for a period of up to five (5) years, if the developer is unable to find a retail tenant within a six (6) month period. The Virginia Square Sector Plan calls for retail along Wilson Boulevard and the Dittmar proposal is in direct violation of this goal. The Ballston and Virginia Square communities see thriving, diverse, attractive service/commercial retail as a community benefit. Unfortunately the proposal as designed is not inclined to attract such retail. The retail spaces are relatively small in size, which would be inadequate space for a successful business. Additionally, the only retail short-term parking is located in the North building, which decreases the customer's ability to access retail locations on the South building.

Proposed Retail Solution

All retail spaces along Wilson Boulevard should be designated as service/commercial spaces only and should not be designated as flex spaces. Additionally, these locations should be built large enough so that potential retail tenants will be attracted to rent these locations. An increase in retail short-term parking in proximity to the South building will improve the viability of these retail locations.

Public Space

During the course of the site plan review process, the developer increased the size and accessibility of the proposed public space along 9th St, in addition to adding a water feature to the center of the street to activate this space. While the Association is pleased with the developer's goals, specifically giving 9th St N. purpose, there are still specifics that need additional clarification.

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Proposed Public Space Solution

The Association is concerned about the construction of the water feature in the middle of 9th St N., especially with regard to the safety of children playing in this area. Therefore, we recommend that the developer add visual direction and other cues, including a different textured pavement, to the street to alert drivers that they are entering a distinct traffic pattern.

We have, as concisely as possibly, stated our Association's concerns and have not yet arrived at a definitive position pending the outcome of the Planning Commission's consideration of this project. We welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns with the applicant, Planning Commissioners, County Staff, and County Board Members as deliberations regarding this proposal continue.

Sincerely,

 /s/
James M. Schroll
President
Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association

Cc: County Board Chairman, Christopher Zimmerman
County Board Vice-Chair, Mary Hynes