

## Angela Brackett

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**From:** Jennifer Zeien <jzeien@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 09, 2011 11:26 AM  
**To:** Christopher Zimmerman  
**Cc:** Stan Karson; Cecilia Cassidy; Gizele Johnson; CountyBoard; Samia Byrd; Tom Miller; Nan Walsh  
**Subject:** Proposed minor site plan amendments SP #18, Monday Properties  
**Attachments:** 1812 North Moore Street.pdf

Dear Mr. Zimmerman:

Attached please find the letter of the North Rosslyn Civic Association with regard to proposed deletion of Condition 87 as part of proposed minor site plan amendments to SP #18, Monday Properties.

Jennifer Zeien  
President  
North Rosslyn Civic Association

## North Rosslyn Civic Association

1902 N Ode St  
Arlington, VA 22209-1412

September 8, 2011

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Christopher Zimmerman  
Chairman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201  
[czimmerman@arlingtonva.us](mailto:czimmerman@arlingtonva.us)

Re: Minor Site Plan Amendment,  
1812 North Moore Street  
Case No. SP #18

Dear Mr. Zimmerman:

The North Rosslyn Civic Association ("NRCA") strongly objects to developer Monday Properties' proposed deletion of Condition 87 on Case No. SP #18, site plan for 1812 North Moore Street, as proposed in developer's revised application filed July 20, 2011.<sup>1</sup> The County Board is scheduled to consider this minor site plan amendment September 17, 2011. NRCA believes that removal of Condition 87 as part of a minor site plan amendment alters the benefit of the bargain this community negotiated with Monday Properties through the original site plan process.

Condition Number 87, Through Block Connection/Public Use and Access Easements, defines a significant public benefit associated with this development. Specifically, the intended 24-hour through-block connector is a key feature of the pedestrian aspects of the development, which seeks to broaden and improve pedestrian access between the re-developed North Moore Street – Rosslyn's "Festival Street" – and residential communities to the west. Allowing deletion of Site Plan Condition 87 would severely reduce the value of community benefits associated with what will become the tallest building in Rosslyn.

At the present time, there are two principal through-block connections linking central Rosslyn and the residential areas. The first connection is provided via a narrow stairwell between the rear of the Metro lobby and Ft. Myer Drive. We understand that

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<sup>1</sup> NRCA's objections are based on our review of the developer's written application and on a half-hour presentation to the Executive Committee of Rosslyn Renaissance by Andrew McGeorge of Monday Properties on September 7, 2011, which focused on this aspect of the proposed site plan amendment.

this stairwell, which is inadequate for the current volume of pedestrian traffic, cannot be widened. Although refurbishment is planned, the amount of foot traffic accommodated by this passage will not be increased under the plan negotiated by the developer, WMATA, and County staff.

The second through-block connection is provided by the existing Skywalk system. A large fraction of the foot traffic moving between the residential areas and downtown utilizes this pathway crossing above Nash Street and Ft. Myer Drive that feeds into a plaza above the Metro station, where an escalator to the Metro lobby area eases differences in elevation. We understand that WMATA considers the escalator a maintenance problem and is proposing to replace it with a staircase to the plaza level. Rather than improving and increasing through-block access, removal of the escalator will tend to impair access. We also understand that the County disfavors the Skywalk system and that the community may lose vital linkages crossing Ft. Myer and Nash Streets in connection with future redevelopment projects. While NRCA strongly opposes removal of the escalator and any plan that would remove either of these two Skywalks, the possibility remains that, absent Site Plan Condition 87, through-block access may actually be reduced over time rather than augmented.

The developer intends to fulfill the objectives of Condition 87 by substituting a proposed new site plan condition that would install an elevator running from a small vestibule on Ft. Myer Drive to the north-west corner of the Metro's lobby area. WMATA requirements for station closing result in the elevator access being hidden down a corridor, behind the bike racks in the Metro lobby, where safety may become an issue, particularly in off hours. It is also obvious from the design that few apart from the physically disabled or heavily encumbered would choose this means of transitioning between the downtown area and the residential community. NRCA does not believe that this elevator will appreciably augment present through-block pedestrian access.

It was the community's vision – and the developer's original proposal – that the 1812 building's through-lobby connection would celebrate and strengthen community access to the heart of the downtown area. We were shown renderings of a soaring light-filled space featuring enlivening artwork and multiple escalators transitioning the change in elevation between North Moore Street and Ft. Myer Drive. Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") access for wheelchairs was proposed to be provided by an open lift within 1812's interior lobby space and enhanced by proximity sensors that would activate the building's exterior doors.<sup>2</sup> The community considered the access to this gracious space, along with other negotiated benefits, to be an offset to the burdens placed on the community by this very tall building. Such access would enhance the pedestrian experience, promote safety, and encourage community use of the downtown area.

Should Condition 87 be deleted, nothing in the remaining site conditions would require the developer to provide public access to the lobby of the 1812 building. Without such a written condition, nothing would prevent this lobby from becoming a closed-

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<sup>2</sup> The lobby entrance proximity sensors, part of Condition 88, are also proposed for deletion in this minor site plan amendment.

access or limited-access venue, removed from the public in direct contravention of the original intent of the site plan condition. Rather than encouraging access between the residential area and the center of Rosslyn, allowing the developer to limit or close access through the 1812 lobby, when considered in light of the other changes outlined in this letter, will actually result in constricting access between residential areas of the community and downtown Rosslyn.

For these reasons, NRCA asks the county to preserve Condition 87 as now written. In the alternative, should the Board consider the present wording of Condition 87 to be too burdensome on the developer, NRCA asks that, rather than deleting the condition, the Board modify the condition as to the hours for public access only. A modification requiring the developer to provide public access through its lobby during hours when Metro, restaurants, and businesses in the core of Rosslyn are operating (e.g., 6:00 AM to midnight) would ensure that the most valuable aspect of this public benefit was adequately preserved.

Very truly yours,



Jennifer J. Zeien  
President  
North Rosslyn Civic Association

cc: Arlington County Board  
Tom Miller, Supervisor, Current Planning, Arlington County  
Gizele Johnson, Arlington County Planning Commission  
Samia Byrd, Site Plan Coordinator, Arlington County  
Nan Walsh, Walsh Collucci Lubeley Emerich & Walsh PC  
Cecilia Cassidy, Executive Director, Rosslyn Renaissance  
Stan Karson, President, Radnor, Ft. Myer Civic Association