ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
2100 CLARENDON BOULEVARD, SUITE 700
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201
(703) 228-3525 • FAX (703) 228-3543

STEVE SOCKWELL
CHAIR

BRIAN HARNER
VICE CHAIR

FREIDA WRAY
COORDINATOR

GIZELE C. JOHNSON
CLERK

December 3, 2012

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

SUBJECT: **3.**

A. Z-2563-12-1 Rezoning from "C-M" Limited Industrial Districts to "C-O-Crystal City" Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts, located at 1720 S. Eads St. and identified as RPC# 35-011-001.

B. SP#424 South Eads LLC for a site plan to allow construction of an approximately 210,918 sq. ft. residential building in the "C-O-Crystal City" zoning district under ACZO §25C.E and §36.H. Property is approximately 34,147 sq. ft., located at 1720 S. Eads St., and is identified as RPC# 35-011-001. The proposed density is 6.18 FAR. Modifications of zoning ordinance requirements include bonus density for LEED Silver, density exclusions for below grade mechanical and storage, and vertical shafts, reduced parking ratio, reduction in loading docks, streetscape, building height, and other modifications as may be necessary to achieve the proposed development plan. Applicable policies: GLUP Residential "High-Medium" (Up to 3.24 FAR Residential), Crystal City Sector Plan, and Crystal City Coordinated Redevelopment District designation. **(1720 S. Eads Street)**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. Approve the zoning from "C-M" Limited Industrial Districts to "C-O-Crystal City" Commercial Office Building, Retail, Hotel and Multiple-Family Dwelling Districts.

B. Adopt the ordinance to approve the site plan, subject to the conditions of the ordinance, with the following modifications:

1. **Amend Condition #82 to delete the phrase "and other areas adjacent to this site plan".**
2. **Do not support the requested modification to building height.**

3. **Do not approve the specialty paver treatment in the pedestrian clear zones.**

Dear County Board Members:

The Planning Commission heard these items at its November 28, 2012 meeting. Samia Byrd, CPHD Planning, described the requests associated with the proposed development on the Crystal City Post Office site, including the proposed rezoning and SP #424. She described the ways in which staff believes the proposed requests further the goals of the Crystal City Sector Plan. Ms. Byrd also summarized the community benefits package, to include contributions toward utility undergrounding, public art, affordable housing and open space; installation of multi-space parking meters, implementation of transportation demand management elements, implementation of off-site transportation improvements, and provision of an in-building first responder network . Finally, Ms Byrd briefly described the outstanding issues, including requests for building height modification and specialty paving treatment. Also present were Anthony Fusarelli of CPHD Planning and Lisa Maher of DES.

The development team for the applicant, South Eads LLC, was present, including Stephan Rodiger and Asheel Shah, applicant (Kettler); David Tarter, attorney (Lawson, Tarter, & Charvet); Rohit Anand, architect (KTGY); and Mike O'Hara, engineer (Bohler). Mr. Tarter provided a brief summary of the requests associated with the redevelopment of this site, highlighting it as a classic example of a transit oriented development. Mr. Anand described the various elements of the building design and its relationship to the street, the site design including the specialty paving treatment, the various ground floor building uses, loading and garage access, and amenities of the courtyard and rooftop areas.

Public Speakers

Nancy Swain, representing the Arlington Ridge Civic Association, stated that the Association did not have a formal position on the proposal. She referred to discussions of the Association's executive committee, in which she noted their surprise that the proposed development would double the density on the GLUP and she hoped it would not create a precedent for other redevelopment in Crystal City. She commented that a buffer zone between the single family neighborhood and the apartment building would be desirable. She also suggested that the community benefits package include improvements that would benefit the entire community, such as improvements to the library frontage.

Planning Commission Reports

Chair Sockwell requested staff to provide a report on the Transportation Commission, in the absence of Commissioner Forinash. Ms. Maher reported that the Transportation Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed development. There were no outstanding transportation issues. There was some discussion on the reduced residential parking ratio that staff supports, and relocation of the existing bus stop and installation of new bus stops.

Commissioner Ciotti reported that there were three SPRC meetings. She provided a summary of some of the concerns discussed at the meetings, including the slight reduction in the sidewalk width

on South Eads Street, expanded landscaped median on 18th Street, reduced residential parking ratio, and upgrades to the garage doors.

Chair Sockwell referred to the discussion outline in the SPRC report and asked the Commission if it wanted to add to the outline.

Commissioner Cole requested to add a discussion of the community benefits package, including its relationship to the additional density and building height. He also requested to add a discussion of the tower coverage.

Commissioner Fallon noted that he had questions regarding the use of LEED bonus and the RBL issue referenced in the staff's presentation.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Cole sought clarification on several issues. He inquired about the applicant's proposal to install 5-foot wide temporary walkways and provide exterior lighting on South Eads and 18th Streets during construction. Ms. Maher stated that staff concurs with the proposed 5-foot wide temporary walkway and will revise Condition #6 to address it. She did not think the applicant's proposal for exterior lighting was different from the standard condition requirements.

Commissioner Cole inquired about the replacement of the parking lane with a bike lane on the opposite side of South Eads Street. While he assumed the purpose was to influence less vehicular traffic, the parking lane provides a buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Ms. Maher responded that the Crystal City Sector Plan and the Crystal City Multimodal Study provide guidance for street cross-sections and building placement, and there is insufficient width on South Eads Street to provide all the elements called for in the plans at this time partly due to existing development on the opposite side of the street. Since the South Eads Street cross-section would be 9 feet short, staff has recommended a reduction in the sidewalk width by two feet and elimination of the 7-foot parking lane on the opposite side of the street. Staff does not believe elimination of the parking lane would present a safety issue for pedestrians due to the wide sidewalk at that location. Making multimodal improvements was a priority.

Commissioner Cole inquired if the proposed site plan, and the associated density, is inconsistent with the GLUP. Ms. Byrd responded that it is not inconsistent with the GLUP. The Crystal City Sector Plan provides guidance for additional density to ameliorate impacts. The base density is compliant with the "C-O-Crystal City" zoning district and additional density above the base would be reviewed and approved by the County Board as furthering the goals of the plans and policies for the Crystal City area.

With regard to Commissioner Cole's statements about the loss of the parking lane, Commissioner Sockwell stated that he does believe that removal of a parking lane will reduce traffic. However, in looking at the bike lanes on Wilson and Clarendon Boulevards, he believes that if the bike lanes are wide enough they will result in zones in which vehicles will most likely not enter.

<u>SPRC Discussion Outline</u>

- Density and built form

Commissioner Cole provided a general statement about the Planning Commission's ability to fully and fairly assess community benefits in the context of a site plan, and suggested that Chair Sockwell might want to discuss this with the County Board Chair in the future. He referred to the letter from Christer Ahl and Judy Freshman in which they questioned whether the community benefits offered in the site plan were sufficient. Commissioner Cole stated that the Commission does not have a way of judging the appropriateness of the community benefit packages because the necessary information and associated values have not been made available to them. If the Commission is to provide useful advice to the County Board on the community benefits, then the additional information should be made available to them when they take these issues up. It is clearly within the requirements of state law that the Commission be able to provide advice to the County Board on these matters.

Commissioner Monfort stated that it would be difficult for the Commission to adequately evaluate the 2.5 FAR of additional density, without knowing how it relates to the community benefits contributions. Ms. Byrd referred to the statistical summary in the staff report and the densities attributable to various bonuses. Commissioner Monfort asked staff to provide a breakdown of the bonus densities and how they are related to the community benefits.

Commissioner Fallon concurred with Commissioner Monfort that a table showing how the bonuses and community benefits are allocated would be useful to the discussion. This type of information is needed in future Planning Commission meetings, especially for projects in Crystal City. Ms. Byrd noted that one of the differences between this proposal and the Bergmann's project, for instance, is that "C-O-Crystal City" density is not as prescriptive and there is no cap on the additional density that may be approved by the County Board.

Commissioner Fallon inquired if the balcony projections encroached into the sidewalk/public ROW. Ms. Byrd responded that the projections are consistent with the Sector Plan, which allows encroachments of up to six feet into the sidewalk. Commissioner Fallon noted that the balconies are within the public ROW but add value to the applicant's building and he hoped that this was factored into the calculation of community benefits discussions.

Commissioner Fallon inquired about the difference in the heights of the rooftop bathrooms and lifeguard room. Mr. Anand responded that both the bathrooms and lifeguard room have heights of 10 feet, but the lifeguard room is located on the pool deck, which is 5 feet above the main roof. Commissioner Fallon stated that staff does not support the height modification and asked what would happen to the proposed design if an exception to the roof height is not approved by the County Board. Ms. Byrd responded that the applicant would be required to provide bathrooms on the floor below and access to the bathrooms.

Commissioner Cole asked about the pool deck, which is 5 feet above the maximum permitted 110 feet building height. Even if the bathrooms are relocated to a lower level, the pool deck remains above the maximum building height. Ms. Byrd responded that staff would discuss with the Zoning Administrator about the Ordinance interpretation because, unlike the bathrooms and lifeguard room, the pool is not an enclosed structure.

Commissioner Klein stated that there are a lot of examples of residential buildings in Arlington with rooftop pools and she does not understand why staff does not support the proposed facilities which are welcomed amenities for the building residents.

Commissioner Cole stated that the issue is not the amenity, but rather the proposal's compliance with the guidance provided by the Sector Plan on building height. This will be the first residential building to be constructed under the Crystal City Sector Plan. Ms. Byrd stated that the maximum building height focuses on occupiable space, to which Commissioner Cole responded that the pool is occupiable. Mr. Tarter stated that the County Board has the authority to modify the building height. He noted that the rooftop amenities represent a very small amount of space and are expected in a high-end project. The applicant and architect agreed to study this further to determine an alternative approach. Commissioner Cole referred to Section 25CE5a(2) of the Zoning Ordinance, "C-O-Crystal City", which addresses modifications to building heights by site plan under site-specific circumstances. Mr. Fusarelli clarified that the section addresses modifications to the "dimensions of height zones" on Map 25C3, rather than building heights by site plan under site-specific circumstances.

Commissioner Monfort stated that building height is the only limitation or standard in the "C-O-Crystal City" district for the building with regard to size, and it is important that we get this right.

Commissioner Fallon commented that he likes the amenities on the roof, which activate the roof rather than merely house equipment. All of the enclosed amenity spaces have been included in the density calculations. Commissioner Fallon asked staff to explain the LEED bonus as it relates to the revised LEED Green Building Incentive Program Policy. Ms. Byrd explained that .25 FAR bonus density is for commitment to LEED Silver Certification and .10 FAR bonus density is for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance (LEED-EBOM) Certification. The proposed bonus densities are consistent with the goals of the Sector Plan in addressing energy efficiency and sustainable building design consistent with the Community Energy Plan, and this would be the first project in the County to commit to LEED-EBOM Certification under the revised policy.

Commissioner Ciotti commented that it is important to recognize that the proposed rooftop amenities increase the quality of life for the building residents. Rooftop bathrooms relative to their being occupiable space seems to be a zoning definition question. If the applicant is required to lose one floor, she expressed concern for the impact on the provision of affordable housing.

Commissioner Cole stated that there are several zoning districts in which amenities are permitted above the main roof; however, "C-O-Crystal City" is one of those districts whereby the County Board specifically did not permit rooftop amenities above the main roof. The issue is not the height of the amenities and pool, but that the applicant could reduce the building height in order that these uses can occur on the rooftop.

Commissioner Monfort concurred that the ordinance allows a maximum height of 110 feet and the applicant should comply and reduce the building height. Mr. Tarter responded that if a floor is taken off, the density will be reduced and the community benefits will be reduced accordingly. The district is written such that for any density above the base density a proportional amount of community benefits would be required.

Commissioner Klein asked staff to confirm whether pools have been approved above the maximum building height in other site plan projects.

Commissioner Iacomini inquired as to what point in the staff review was the height of the bathrooms and lifeguard room noted and became an issue, to which Ms. Byrd responded that it was identified toward the end of the site plan review process. In response to Commissioner Klein's question about other site plans where pools were approved above the height limit, Ms. Byrd stated that what is permitted above the maximum building height varies by zoning district. Certain districts allow height to be modified by the County Board, and some districts allow rooftop amenity spaces that do not count toward the maximum building height. She stated that she is aware of one site plan whereby the amenities were relocated to the roof and the height was amended by the County Board, but that was a zoning district that allowed the County Board to modify the height under certain circumstances. The proposed zoning is for a district where the height is absolute, except for certain circumstances. Ms. Byrd reminded the Commission that height modification would actually be a modification of the building height zone on the building heights map, which can be modified under certain circumstances, such as for architectural features, which this proposal does not address, or for special circumstances which are not clearly defined. She stated that she does not think there are any site conditions here that would qualify as a special circumstance.

Commissioner Harner asked for clarification about the height of the pool deck relative to the depth of the pool and the number of residential units below the pool to determine if the pool could be recessed. Mr. Anand responded that approximately six units, plus the corridor, may be impacted but agreed to further evaluate this alternative, including impacts on such code requirements as fire egress.

Commissioner Fallon stated that while he has no issue with the pool deck, it may need to be reconfigured. He asked about the reasoning behind the building height cap under "C-O-Crystal City". Mr. Fusarelli responded that the lack of a numeric cap on building density received a lot of attention and interest during the Crystal City planning process, which led to the very hard stance that "Under no circumstances may the County Board approve heights above those specified in the Building Heights Map…", regardless of the bonuses. Commissioner Fallon followed that during the Crystal City discussions it appears these types of rooftop amenities, which add value to projects, were not envisioned. He questioned whether they should be considered in the community benefits calculation. Mr. Fusarelli confirmed that these types of amenities relative to building height were not discussed in detail during the Crystal City planning process.

Commissioner Ciotti asked if concerns were raised during the Crystal City planning process about occupiable space above the maximum 110 feet building height, as she was attempting to determine if the pool deck height is in fact non-compliant. Mr. Fusarelli responded that the building height, relative to any structures above the main roof, would be determined based on the Ordinance definition of GFA. He added that some activity on the rooftops was anticipated during the planning process, but the potential to exceed the building height was not among the considerations.

Commissioner Cole encouraged the Commission to review the letter from Christer Ahl and Judy Freshman regarding their perspectives on the project as representing the Crystal City community.

With respect to Mr. Tarter's earlier comments, he stated that it would be a huge mistake to start from the mindset that a building height of 110 feet is the developer's right. The base density is 3.24 FAR and anything above that is approved in exchange for extraordinary community benefits, which in this case the question is whether there are sufficient extraordinary community benefits to justify the additional 40% of development. Commissioner Cole stated that he took great exception to Mr. Tarter's comment suggesting that the project could lose almost 10% of its community benefits if 9% of the density is removed. With regard to Condition #82, Commissioner Cole sought confirmation on the correct amount of the open space contribution, which is $396,881 (rather than $388,532 as stated in the draft staff report). He pointed to the requirement in the condition that states that the funds will be "…dedicated for use in the implementation and improvement of open space in Crystal City and other areas adjacent to this site plan". With the 1900 Crystal Drive Site Plan, he thought it was a travesty that the site plan did not contribute to Center Park. Center Park will not be developed unless funds are set aside for it. Commissioner Cole agreed with Mr. Ahl and Ms. Freshman when they stated in their letter that community benefit funds should not be available for other open space areas adjacent to Crystal City. Furthermore, he stated that he will be recommending an amendment to Condition #82 to restrict the use of the funds to open space in Crystal City only. Given the extraordinary funding that will be needed to develop Center Park, with quotes upward of $90 million, contributions from at least 35 redevelopment projects would have to be approved. This will not happen for many years in the future. Commissioner Cole also questioned whether the scale of the community benefits is appropriate given the significant increases in density resulting from the Sector Plan. With regard to Condition #82, Ms. Byrd stated that the funds are intended to be used for the implementation and improvements to Center Park, but was written to allow the flexibility to use the funds in other areas adjacent to the site plan if the County Manager chose to do so. Commissioner Cole followed that while the County Board can always decide how to redirect the funds, the Commission should take the side of the community to protect what is important to them.

Commissioner Fallon concurred that the funds should be earmarked for open space areas in Crystal City, but did not agree that the funds should sit longterm in a trust and agency account until sufficient funds have accumulated to build Center Park. Implementation of Center Park could take years. He suggested that the funds be used toward improvements to the frontage of the Aurora Highlands Library as recommended by the speaker.

Commissioner Harner asked a number of questions about the treatment and materials on the building façade, including clarification regarding mechanical vents. Because density was excluded for the provision of vertical shafts, Commissioner Harner sought confirmation that no mechanical vents would be provided on the building façades. Mr. Anand responded that the vents are for the bathrooms and kitchens. Ms. Byrd stated that the number of vents on the façade have been significantly reduced with the provision of vertical shafts. In response to a question from Commissioner Monfort, Ms. Byrd agreed to research whether buildings that were approved with density exclusions for vertical shafts are still being constructed with mechanical vents on the facades.

- <u>Proposed siting of building</u>

Commissioner Fallon inquired about the project's compliance with the Sector Plan design guidelines for the Required Build-to Lines (RBL). Ms. Byrd responded that the project varies from the

recommendations of the Sector Plan, but by no more than six to seven feet, due to locations of building openings for garage and loading entrances, building entrances, and landscaping buffers. Staff has no issues with the deviations, as the building follows the contours of the site. Staff has evaluated the proposal to ensure there is a consistent grid and the public realm is enhanced. Commissioner Harner inquired as to whether staff's analysis of the South Eads Street cross-section included the building's siting relative to the RBL and the potential for regaining space in order to retain the parking lane. Ms. Maher responded that the narrow street cross-section is not due to the location of the eastern building wall relative to the RBL, but rather it is the distance between the two curb lines including the curb line on the opposite side of the street which is not being redeveloped. Commissioner Harner stated his disappointment that on-street parking would be lost for a number of years.

Commissioner Monfort expressed support for the staff decision regarding the RBL.

- <u>Appropriateness of the reduced parking ratio</u>

Commissioner Klein stated that because of the extensive transportation network, it is reasonable to accept a reduced residential parking ratio. Commissioners Sockwell and Fallon concurred. Commissioner Fallon added that while a parking ratio of one space per unit should be expected in a high-end building, the reduced parking ratio should be okay since it is a rental.

- <u>Specialty sidewalk pavers</u>

In response to Commissioner Sockwell's question about the issue with the specialty sidewalk pavers, Ms. Byrd responded that they are not permitted in the pedestrian clear zones. Ms. Maher added that the Master Transportation Plan calls for concrete in the pedestrian clear zones, and the requirement is very explicit in the Sector Plan.

Commissioner Monfort expressed frustration that with the 1900 Crystal Drive Site Plan the Commission fought very hard to get the applicant to comply with the Sector Plan guidance and the County Board approved the specialty pavers. On the contrary, the specialty pavers were not approved with the Rosslyn Gateway Site Plan.

Commissioner Cole asked why staff continues to be opposed to the specialty pavers, to which Ms. Maher responded that staff's recommendation is based on adopted policy. Furthermore, there is no good design reason for the change in the sidewalk treatment. Commissioner Cole agreed with Commissioner Monfort that clarity is needed from the County Board on this issue.

Commissioner Harner stated that, because the County Board diverted from the policy once, he is does not think that a consistent sidewalk treatment is a bad idea. He believes more work is required by staff to identify some latitude as to when specialty pavers could potentially be used.

- <u>Planting additional trees in the medians</u>

Commissioner Ciotti requested clarification on the trees to be planted in the median strips. Ms. Byrd explained that her understanding of the question raised at SPRC was whether the median could be

widened to allow a double row of canopy trees. Staff's understanding is that the median would be improved and trees planted, but not necessarily widened.

- Tower coverage

Commissioner Cole inquired about how the 65% tower coverage, as specified in the Crystal City Sector Plan, was calculated. Mr. Fusarelli explained that the Sector Plan addresses tower coverage on a block, rather than individual site, level and the aggregate tower coverage over the entire subject block cannot exceed 65%. In this situation, there is not a full block consolidation, so although the tower coverage on the site alone slightly exceeds the 65% maximum, based on the block level staff analysis, the resulting tower coverage for the block with this project would be less than 30%, which is well below the 65% limit and therefore supported by staff.

Commissioner Cole also inquired about tower separation, which is required to be 60 feet between buildings, noting that there may be discrepancies in the requirements of adjacent buildings. Mr. Fusarelli explained the proposed development would not create an inequity. The tower separation requirement, while codified in the Zoning Ordinance, can be modified under certain conditions. The design guidelines distinguish a base, middle and top. Staff supports differentiations between the base, middle and top using different strategies rather than significant building setbacks above the base because of the constraints of the limited size of the site. When considering the balance of the block for potential redevelopment, there is sufficient ability to achieve additional density consistent with the vision of the Sector Plan, while also responding to the required 60-foot tower separation policy.

- Community benefits

Commissioner Fallon inquired about the significance of the in-building first responder network, and whether community benefit funds could be earmarked for another activity. Ms. Byrd responded that this is a higher level technology utilizing fiber optics, rather than antennae, that the County needs in order to enhance its emergency communications coverage. This project will be the first to incorporate the new system.

Planning Commission Motion

Rezoning

Commissioner Ciotti moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board adopt the resolution to rezone the subject site from "C-M" to "C-O-Crystal City". Commissioner Cole seconded the motion. The Commission voted 8-0 to approve the motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Fallon, Harner, Iacomini, Klein, Monfort, and Sockwell supported the motion.

Site Plan

Commissioner Ciotti moved that the Planning Commission recommend that the County Board adopt the ordinance to approve the site plan, subject to the conditions of the ordinance. Commissioner Klein seconded the motion.

Commissioner Cole asked for unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board modify Condition #82 to delete the phrase “and other areas adjacent to this site plan”. Commissioner Fallon objected. Commissioner Cole moved that the Planning Commission amend the motion to recommend that the County Board modify Condition #82 to delete the phrase “and other areas adjacent to this site plan”. Commissioner Monfort seconded the motion.

Commissioner Fallon stated that while he is sensitive to the intent of the motion, he would not want to preclude use of a portion of the $400,000 funds for a site that is immediately available to and benefits the residents of Crystal City, but might otherwise be located beyond their borders.

Commissioner Monfort clarified Commissioner Cole’s motion which leaves intact the rest of the language that states that funds can be used for the implementation of any open space in Crystal City and not necessarily Center Park.

The Commission voted 6-2 to support the amended motion. Commissioners Cole, Harner, Iacomini, Klein, Monfort, and Sockwell supported the amended motion. Commissioners Ciotti and Fallon opposed the amended motion. The motion passed, so the amendment was incorporated into the main motion.

Commissioner Cole asked for unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board deny the proposed modification to building height to allow active uses on the rooftop. Commissioner Fallon objected. Commissioner Cole moved that the Planning Commission amend the motion to recommend that the County Board deny the proposed modification to building height to allow active uses on the rooftop. Commissioner Iacomini seconded the motion.

Commissioner Fallon asked if the motion has a broader impact relating to all of the active uses on the rooftop, as the swimming pool deck has a height of 5 feet above the maximum permitted height. Commissioner Cole responded that the pool deck would be included in the motion to deny the modification to building height.

Commissioner Monfort stated that he supports the amendment to the motion because the height limit in Crystal City is the only restriction on the size of buildings and the community expects adherence to it.

Commissioner Sockwell stated that he supports the amendment to the motion for the same reason.

Commissioner Harner commented that he is troubled by the pool deck exceeding the maximum building height because, if redesigned right, the pool can be suppressed without impacting the building.

Commissioner Ciotti expressed concern that the amendment to the motion used the phrase “active use” and therefore will not support the motion. Commissioner Cole stated that he was willing to accept other terminology. Commissioner Ciotti agreed to “no modification of height”.

Commissioner Cole asked for unanimous consent to modify his motion to *not support the requested modification of building height*. As seconder, Commissioner Iacomini agreed to the change in the motion. The Commission voted 5-3 to support the amended motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Iacomini and Sockwell supported the amended motion. Commissioners Fallon, Klein and Harner opposed the amended motion. The motion passed, so the amendment was incorporated into the main motion.

Commissioner Iacomini asked for unanimous consent to amend the motion to recommend that the County Board not approve the specialty paver treatment in the pedestrian clear zones. Commissioner Monfort objected. Commissioner Iacomini moved that the Planning Commission amend the motion to recommend that the County Board not approve the specialty paver treatment in the pedestrian clear zones. Commissioner Harner seconded the motion. The Commission voted 5-2-1 to support the amended motion. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Harner, Iacomini and Sockwell supported the amended motion. Commissioners Klein and Monfort opposed the amended motion. Commissioner Fallon abstained. The motion passed, so the amendment was incorporated into the main motion.

The Commission voted 7-1 to support the main motion, with a number of modifications. Commissioners Ciotti, Cole, Fallon, Harner, Iacomini, Monfort, and Sockwell supported the amended motion. Commissioner Klein opposed the amended motion.

Respectfully Submitted,
Arlington County Planning Commission

Stephen Sockwell
Planning Commission Chair

November 27, 2012

To: Members of the Planning Commission

From: Christer Ahl and Judy Freshman
Crystal City Representatives on the SPRC for SP # 424

Re: **SP # 424 and Z-2563-12-1**

Regrettably, we are unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting tomorrow, when this matter has been placed on the agenda, as we are precisely tomorrow serving as Co-Chairs in a meeting of the Crystal City Citizen Review Council. Accordingly, we would instead wish to bring the following observations to your attention.

As we indicated during the SPRC meetings, we do not wish to argue against approval for SP # 424, but we have several concerns. In particular, the proposed density, with a very intensive utilization of the site, is not a promising indication of what the implementation of the Crystal City Plan may turn out to entail.

While we appreciate the value of some features of the Plan, such as the affordable housing units on site, we are frankly amazed and concerned about the way in which the request for a really huge total density, almost twice that allowed under C-O-Crystal City, appears to have been seen as justified on account of the community benefits offered. Many of these benefits seem to be of a 'routine' nature in relation to what we would want to expect under the CCSP, and we cannot see that they add up to a package that is commensurate with what staff seems ready to support in terms of density. Accordingly, we believe the extra density and the 'benefits calculation' would set a highly undesirable precedent.

When we expressed similar concerns in connection with the Site Plan for 1900 Crystal Drive, the County offered the explanation that the Plan concerned a redevelopment of a site that has been specifically and significantly affected by BRAC. We note that this definitely does not apply in the case of SP # 424.

We are concerned about the complete absence of any meaningful element of open space, considering the huge density proposed. The CCSP explicitly contains an undertaking that, beyond the specifically proposed open space in the CCSP, 'every effort would be made to identify and provide additional open space in connection with each development plan'. As we see it, SP # 424 does just the opposite.

Accordingly, while we welcome the general approach as an amelioration of an unsatisfactory situation, we find the proposed Condition # 82 to be quite inadequate in several respects. First, we find the amount far too modest and believe that an amount of twice the recommended amount would be warranted. Second, we find the proposed utilization of the fund to be far too vague; it needs to be more specific and should refer to the planned Center Park only a block away from the site. Third, given what we noted above regarding the intentions for Crystal City open space in the CCSP, we object to any notion that this fund should be used for "other adjacent areas".

Finally, on a more positive note, the proposed allocation of parking spaces is slightly on the low side in relation to the parameters suggested for the Crystal City Plan as a whole. However, given the location of the site, just one block from the entrance to the Metro station and various other transit options, such an allocation appears entirely adequate and appropriate.

Thank you very much for your attention!