

**The Falls Church
Village Preservation and Improvement Society
PO Box 6824
Falls Church, VA 22040**

September 27, 2004

Mayor Dan Gardner
and Members of City Council
City of Falls Church
300 Park Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22046

Subject: Proposed Housing Project at West End Park

Dear Mayor Gardner and Members of Council;

The Board of Directors of the Falls Church Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) opposes the proposed housing project at West End Park based on a number of issues apparent from the information currently available to the public.

1. With the density of housing increasing in the City, we should be adding more parkland and open space, not subtracting from it. Once gone, parkland is rarely replaced. The loss of designated parkland and open space will degrade the quality of life over the long term for Falls Church.
2. The size of the building is too big for the lot. The mass and height of the proposed building is out of scale with the West End area and will be an imposing structure, overwhelming the normal uses of the park.
3. The facts do not support the case that this building is needed in the City of Falls Church. The demand for housing with these specific low-income qualifications is not apparent. The waiting list at Winter Hill (same income limitations) of City residents is so short it does not appear justify this large development. It appears to be affordable housing far beyond the quantity needed to house qualifying Falls Church citizens. The City should explore the true need for a building of this size to serve the City.
4. The Board noted that some arguments of possible negative land uses, if this is not approved, are not appropriate. Such large imposing buildings and other negative uses mentioned could only be built with zoning changes granted by the city. The citizens should expect the City to approve a building that meets all current zoning on the commercially zoned part of the property, if one is presented.
5. The City's ownership rights to 50% of the property should be recorded through the subdivision of the property and recordation of the deed as parkland. The informal manner in which the City's property rights have been managed in this case, is an unfortunate contributing cause to the current situation.

We would be pleased to meet with you (as a group or individually) at your convenience to discuss the VPIS Board's positions on this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Keith Thurston
President
And Members of the Board of Directors

cc: Planning Commission