



The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

May 8, 2020

The City of Falls Church
City Manager, Planning Commission and
Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Members
300 Park Avenue
City of Falls Church, VA 22046

SUBJECT: Easement for Relocation of Washington Gas Regulator to West End Park

Dear City Manager, Planning Commission, and Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Members:

The Village Preservation and Improvement Society has long stood for the preservation of our historic and environmental assets, including trees, open space and the beauty and usability of the City's parks. After viewing the materials online, and having had no opportunity to discuss the issue of the relocation of the Washington Gas Regulators to West End Park, we have the following comments:

1. It is difficult to understand why the developers have been unable to find a placement for the Regulators on the ten-acre project itself. It is doubtful that this need was unexpected at the time the plans were made, and therefore we see little basis for placing it outside the project itself. This is particularly true when the city's rare parkland and open space is being used.
2. **We request the City delay its approval of the plans for one week to permit time for VPIS representatives to meet virtually with staff to understand some of the details.** Many of the details are not clear, such as tree losses, saves and replacements; the details of the landscaping and entrance feature replacements and materials; and the site plan concepts. It appears 13 trees may have to be removed.
3. Approval of the easement, without some statement of expectations of the details for the Site Plan amendment to West End Park, puts the City at a significant disadvantage and keeps citizens in the dark as to what the agreement is to be.
4. Considering the value of land in the City, including the financial and aesthetic value of park property, we have not seen a financial justification or compensation amount either for relocating this utility outside the new commercial development area or for departing from the plan at the time of the land sale.

Sincerely,

/s/Mark Gross, Member of the Board of Directors
On behalf of the VPIS Board of Directors

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

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