

10  
1-20-24

**CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov**

**From:** Eric Weiner <ejw77@me.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 15, 2024 6:33 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov; PlanComm  
**Cc:** Leah Kegler; Angela Rice; Angela Welsh; ERNEST PICKELL; Ken Boland; annasmiller@yahoo.com; Atilla Sarah; Bridget Donohue; Brett Rice; cherie marfori; Cindy Savery; Debbie Sikes; erniepickell@gmail.com; Fred Hauchman; Ingrid Jud Allen; Benji; maryannring@comcast.net; Mary Reding; nadine@thebolands.net; Nellie Hauchman; Peter Savery; Sonia Teran; Family; Sarah Kocsis; Vince Delagarde; Atilla Kocsis  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]January 20 City Council Public Hearing\_Opposition to Special Use Permit # 2023-00076 - 404A E Alexandria Ave  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

You don't often get email from ejw77@me.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Alexandria City Council Members,

The Alexandria Planning Commission held a public hearing on January 4th to consider a request for a special use permit (#2023-00076) to construct what can only be described as an unwelcome "Frankenstein" bunker/house at 404A E Alexandria Ave. Despite unanimous opposition voiced by several residents living near the property, the Planning Commission voted 4-3 to approve the permit.

We live down the street from this property at 414 E Alexandria Ave. We purchased a single family home here a few years back in large part because of charm and character of the street. Beautiful craftsman style homes with manicured lawns and flower gardens line the street and Japanese cherry and maple trees bloom in the spring and fall.

The proposed structure at 414A will have none of this quality or charm and the owner intends for this to be a transient, short-term rental property, not a thoughtful addition to the neighborhood. It would also be a nuisance for our neighbors on Mt. Vernon Ave. who depend on the alley for entry/exit and waste services.

We join our numerous fellow neighbors on E Alexandria Ave. and Mt. Vernon Ave. in opposing this proposed construction for the reasons outlined below. We also invite you to visit the micro-lot at 404A and see for yourselves where developer Eric Teran intends to brute-force a dwelling between existing property lines.

If you visit, you will see why no one developed this property. Please see the attached photos to give you an idea.

**Our Primary reasons for opposition include:**

- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray
- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable
- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the proposed home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.
- Mt. Vernon Ave. and East Alexandria Ave lack sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling. There is also insufficient space for construction vehicles/equipment to safely stage at the lot.

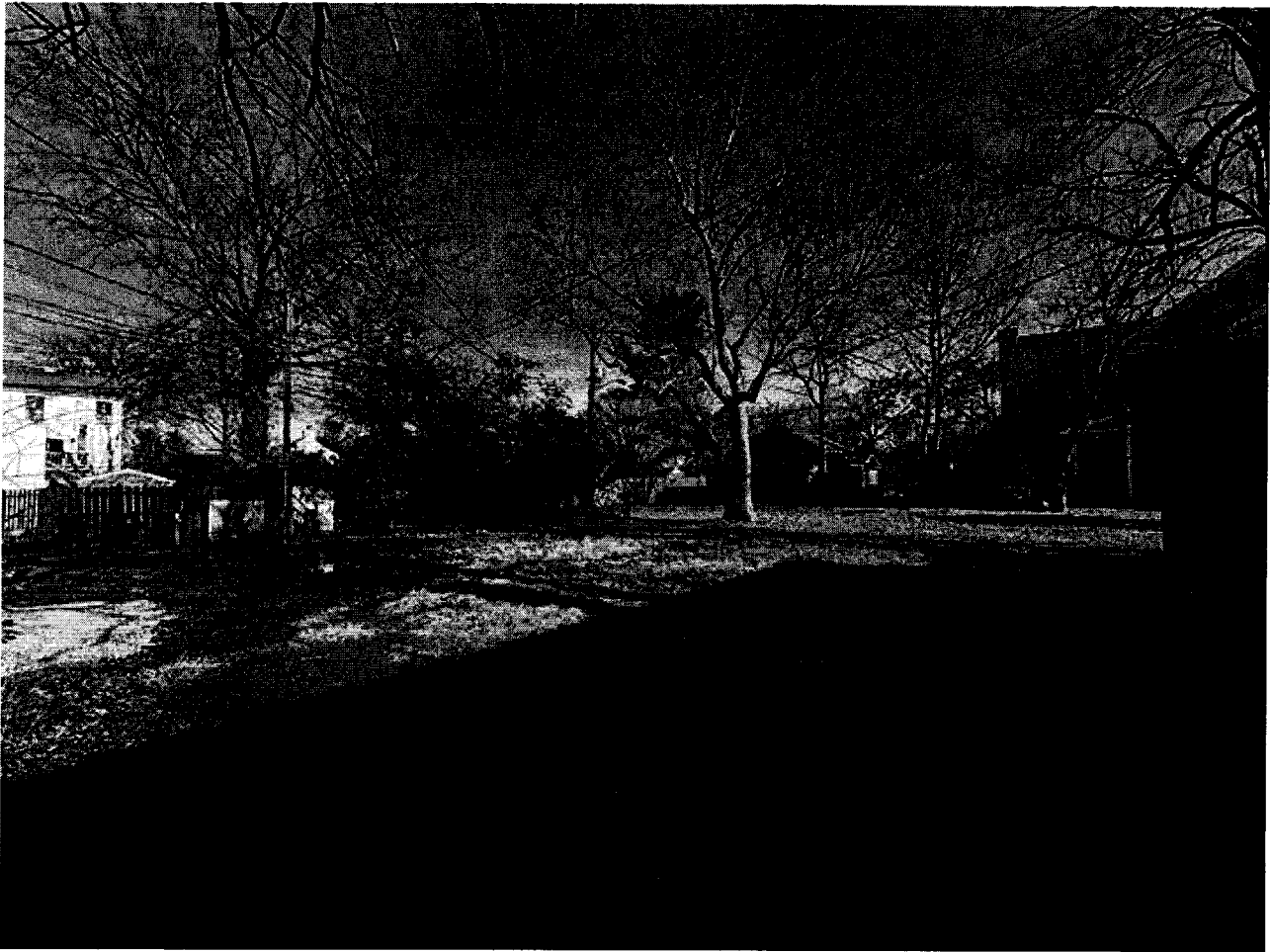
- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home
- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.
- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response
- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are developers looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood. When challenged at the planning commission meeting, Eric Teran said he would just get permits from the city to achieve his construction plan. His responses made it clear that he is not giving serious consideration to the real issues his proposed project will create for the people living in our neighborhood.

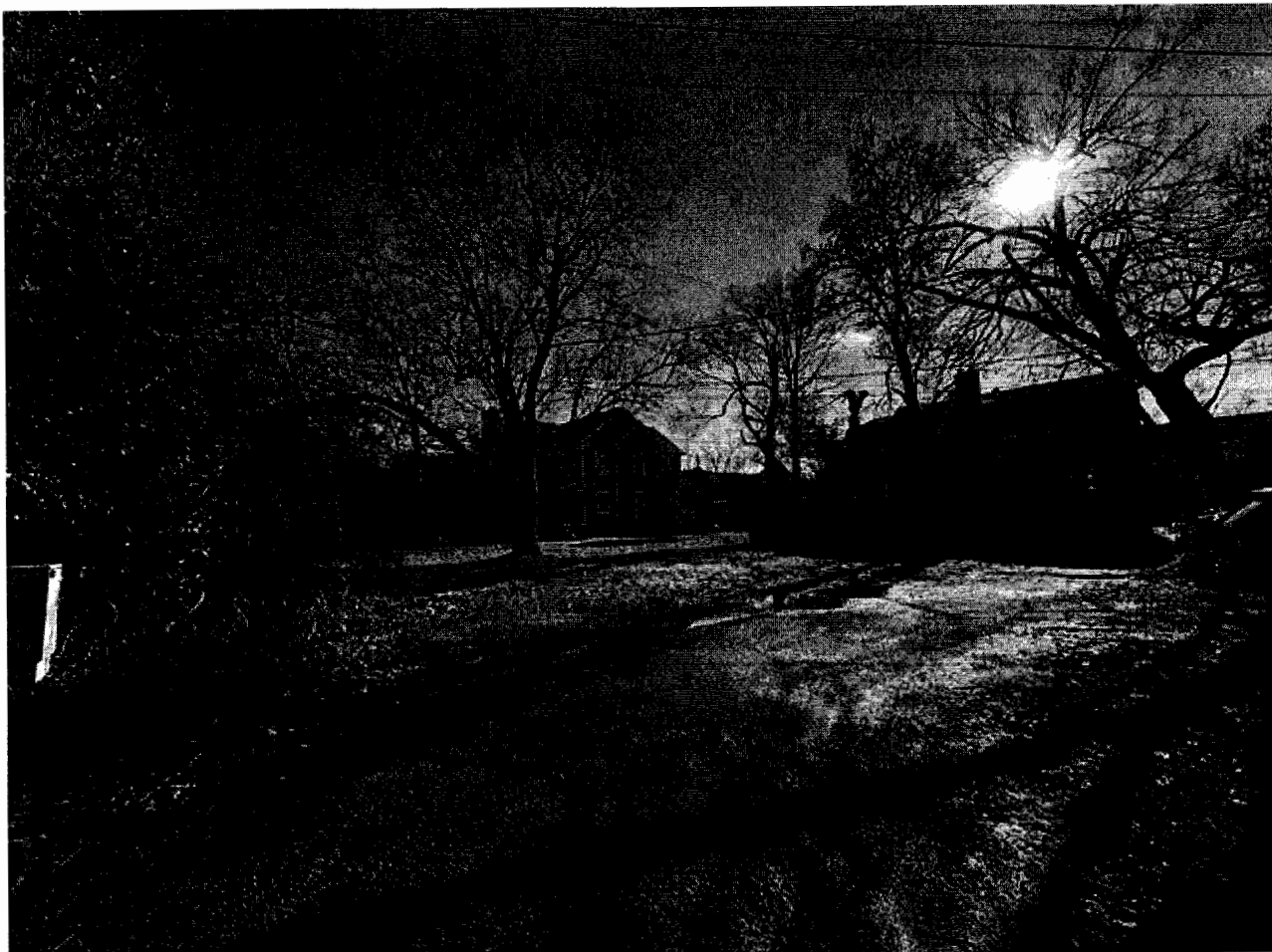
**Please vote to oppose this project.**

Thank you.

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler







---

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

From: Eric Weiner [ejw77@me.com](mailto:ejw77@me.com)

Sent: Thursday January 4, 2024 7:58 PM

To: PlanComm

Subject: Opposition to Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave

Good evening Mr. Pierce and Planning Commission Members,

We live at 414 E Alexandria Ave and we are participating in the public hearing via Zoom. We are writing to express our total opposition to the granting of Special Use Permit #2023-00067 - 404A E Alexandria Ave.

Some of our main reasons for opposition include:

- This project does not fit with the character of Del Ray
  
- The plan will kill the large, 100+ year old tree on the adjacent property and the only consequence for killing it is to replace it with a 2in diameter tree + a \$200 penalty - this is unacceptable
  
- Stormwater management will not be able to keep up ...70% of the home is underground and will flood and the lack of a street to run the water to will invariably flood the adjacent properties.
  
- East Alexandria Ave lacks sufficient parking to support this proposed dwelling
  
- Three of the four alleys surrounding the home are unimproved and don't provide access to the home
  
- If approved, this project would set a terrible precedent whereby builders and developers will build similarly ugly structures that will divide existing lots.
  
- This lot has no street frontage and the fire department would not have the necessary access for timely emergency response

- Eric Teran and Daniela Gross are investors looking to make a profit rather than live in a Del Ray home that retains the character of the neighborhood

Thank you to you and the planning commission for considering our concerns and opposition,

Eric Weiner and Leah Kegler

Dear Councilors to the City of Alexandria,

On behalf of the City of Alexandria's residents, thank you for your continued service representing the best interests of our community. Change is not easy, particularly for a city with extensive historical roots, and as you steer our City through Northern Virginia's growth, I remain proud of your leadership in ensuring that Alexandria maintains a healthy and inclusive community.

The health of our community has embodied a personal obligation to contribute through community service. To date, I have volunteered over 400 hours to the Alexandria Health Department's Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team. This includes weekends supporting and supervising: annual mass influenza vaccination events, several COVID-19 mass testing events, large COVID-19 vaccine clinics that immunized over a thousand community members to smaller clinics in neighborhoods hardest hit by the pandemic, and pediatric vaccine clinics. I also volunteered at the Health Department's COVID-19 call center and as a COVID-19 contract tracer and case investigator. These opportunities gave me a unique opportunity to cross paths with other Alexandrians from different walks of life, and I have left every event prouder of being a resident of this City.

However, I am writing to express my disappointment at the lack of community engagement or consideration by the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Alexandria Planning Commission on the application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) #2023-00076 for 404A E Alexandria Avenue. I only learned about changes in the original application through public filings of the final document, interpreting these documents as a non-subject matter expert with other impacted neighbors, and attending the Planning Commission meeting on January 4, 2024. Beyond these filings and forum, we were never given an opportunity to learn about changes, exchange concerns, or explore alternatives with the City Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant, even though my residence and those of my neighbors would be negatively affected by this new single-family residence with a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit.

This lengthy letter seems to be the last opportunity for community-level input. The first and only opportunity for dialogue was hosted by the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA), which did its job in allowing for deliberation and voting in opposition to this SUP (re. letter sent to Mr. Moritz, Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning). But, instead of following up with DRCA's letter and those of my neighbors, the Department of Planning and Zoning responded through a final report that recommended approval of the SUP permit. Not only did their official report not address the significant concerns in those letters, it only raised more questions. We only wished for dialogue and the Planning and Zoning Staff didn't respond to our requests. Adding to the sting was that we first learned about adaptations at the Planning Commission meeting, after the Staff filed their report and recommendations.

I am in full agreement with my neighbor's and DRCA's concerns and since there is no other opportunity for dialogue with the Planning and Zoning Staff, Planning Commission, or applicant. I am presenting my main concerns through this letter and hopefully as verbal testimony to you, as our City Council.

- Firstly, our residences are part of the Hooffs Run Watershed that sit on-top of underground streams that drain into the very-active Hooffs Run. Most of the recent flooding events, specifically those off Monroe Avenue and off Commonwealth Avenue in the Rosemont Neighborhood, are associated with our watershed. The streams immediately underneath and surrounding our residences have not been disturbed since our multi-unit townhomes were built in the late 1930's with sump pumps being a necessity. My sump pump routinely runs multiple



times during dry periods and almost continuously during rain and snow events. It also takes several days for the large “puddles” on the 404A E Alexandria lot to absorb into the ground after a modest rain event, confirming that the soil is already water-logged by active streams with little capacity for additional run-off. Building a solid structure that runs to the edge of the lot with a predominantly underground footprint will stress these active sub-terrain streams. Since our townhomes are below 404A E Alexandria, it is highly likely that the streams will be diverted and focused into our basements if the proposed building is constructed. My own sump pump is unlikely to handle increased demand and I would predict that putting in a single-family home at 404A E Alexandria could make the surrounding ten homes unlivable given their age and cost for reinforced infrastructure.

- Secondly, the only vehicular access to the proposed unit is through a small public alley off Mount Vernon Avenue. Approving this permit will increase the danger to our immediate community by converting a lightly-used alleyway into an active vehicular thoroughfare. Driving onto Mount Vernon Avenue from this alley means that the driver must first cross an active sidewalk connecting the Braddock Road Metro Station, GW Middle School, and the rest of Alexandria to Del Ray’s “downtown” core. Then, the driver must carefully navigate onto Mount Vernon Avenue after passing parked cars at the edge of the alley entrance, with additional effort that car and bicycle cross-traffic is aware given that the entrance is not obvious (as it is in the middle of the block) or visible from the street. There have been several occasions of cars blocking the alley because visitors thought it was a viable parking spot. The City’s refuse, recycling, and compost collection staff also will not attempt to drive down the alley and instead service our townhomes by parking on Alexandria Avenue and walking down the alley. The detached Accessory Dwelling Unit described in the SUP application has its own dedicated kitchen and laundry in addition to those within the main building, elevating concern that the proposed construction is for two separately-resided buildings. This alley and its intersection with the sidewalk and Mount Vernon Avenue is not designed for the likely increased traffic pressure introduced by two new family units at 404A E Alexandria and regular services such as Amazon or other delivery providers.
- Most shockingly, during verbal testimony provided by the staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning at the Planning Commission meeting, one significant justification for their final recommendation was based on the proposed goals of Zoning For Housing/Housing For All (ZFH). My love of the diversity and inclusivity of this City should show that I am in full support of ZFH and I applaud the Council’s leadership on this issue. However, the residence described in the application for this SUP does not address the vision as it is proposed as a single-family residence (although this counters the design, as mentioned above) that the applicant testified is intended to be a rental. If these are rented, I highly doubt these will be offered at sub-market rental rates as this is not described anywhere. The intended use and design of these buildings are not the model that should represent the vision of ZFH and it is insincere to make that claim. I remain disappointed that these City Staff wanted to distract the lack of substance in their report by politicizing an issue unrelated to this SUP application.

Our family focused our housing search on Alexandria when we were moving back to this region after several years in Seattle. After living in eight different cities, Alexandria is the only city I have ever wanted to put down roots, a commitment that resulted in the purchase of our first home. The past five years have been nothing but amazing, including new routines of weekend walks throughout Alexandria’s diverse neighborhoods, enjoying the multitude of cuisines from Old Town and Arlandria to the West End,

and partaking in multiple events, festivals, farmer's markets, and local theater. We typically find ourselves comparing Alexandria during our vacations, often to the detriment of the cities we're visiting.

As you review this SUP application and my comments, I also ask the City Council to recognize that this review process lacked transparency and community engagement, with concerns filed by my neighbors and DRCA remaining unaddressed. This process has been disappointingly frustrating, and I am speaking as a resident who loves Alexandria and the community represented by its residents and dedicated civil servants.

Again, thanks for this opportunity to voice my concerns. I welcome a call, email, or opportunity to meet if you have any questions about the content of this letter or want to learn more about my concerns about this application or the lack of transparency and engagement in its review.

Respectfully,

Mark Lim (with Yashin Lin)

1407 Mt Vernon Ave

markdlim@gmail.com

January 18, 2024

RE: Opposition to SUP for 404A E Alexandria Ave, Docket 10

Dear Members of the Alexandria City Council,

I am writing to bring to your attention crucial information and concerns raised by the community regarding the Special Use Permit (SUP) application for the proposed development at 404A. The Planning Commission public hearing on January 4, 2024, revealed several points that necessitate a more thorough and objective examination of this project. Opposition to this SUP includes dozens of surrounding neighbors, the Del Ray Citizens Association (DRCA), and its Land Committee. All have strongly requested the denial of this SUP, signaling the need for the City Council's intervention.

The Planning Commission's 4 to 3 vote in favor of the SUP demonstrates the divisive nature of this proposal. The concerns outlined below highlight the potential adverse effects on our community if the SUP is approved:

**Failure to Meet §12-401 (C):** The proposed dwellings at 404A do not align with the existing neighborhood character, violating lot area and width requirements. The Contemporary style and lack of frontage are inconsistent with Del Ray's historical development. The CSRs admit this, but their rationale overlooks the unique nature of this alley lot, setting a problematic precedent for housing construction in our community.

**Diminishing Property Values:** The CSRs' assertion that 404A will not diminish surrounding property values lacks evidentiary support. The crowded-in backyard visual, impaired parking spaces, increased fire risks, stormwater runoff, and destruction of mature trees could all contribute to a reduction in value for neighboring homes. The proximity of 404A to narrow alleys poses challenges for emergency access, potentially lowering the future value of nearby properties.

**FAR Calculation Inaccuracy:** The DRCA warns that the design is dependent on an incorrect basement square footage exclusion from the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculation. Independent analysis is needed to verify the FAR calculation, ensuring compliance with zoning regulations.

**Breach of ADU Rules:** The admission by developers that they will not reside in either the primary residence or the ADU, but rather lease both out, violates zoning code section 7-203.B6. This breach undermines the intent of ADUs to provide affordable housing, setting a precedent for developers to use ADUs as profit centers going against the intent of the Affordable Housing for All policy.

**Parking Concerns and "Party in a Box" Effect:** The already crowded streets in our neighborhood face additional strain with the proposed development at 404A. Inadequate parking provisions and the potential for increased transient tenants could exacerbate

parking challenges. Furthermore, the box-like architecture raises concerns about creating a 'party in a box' effect in our backyards, disrupting the peace and harmony of the neighborhood.

Considering these concerns and the community's overwhelming opposition, I implore you to pause the approval of the SUP for 404A. This project, if approved, risks setting detrimental precedents and jeopardizing the unique character of Del Ray. Your intervention is crucial to ensuring the well-being and harmony of our neighborhood.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Reding  
Concerned Property Owner and Neighbor  
412 E Alexandria Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
(937) 609-4549

## CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov

---

**From:** Justin Reynolds <justinreynolds@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 17, 2024 7:30 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing: Docket No. 10

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Some people who received this message don't often get email from justinreynolds@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

My family and I have lived in the city of Alexandria for 27 years. First I rented, then my wife and I moved into a townhome, and then were fortunate enough to move into a single-family home. Finding our single-family home was a difficult and cumbersome process as the housing stock was limited and there was virtually no vacant land to build on. The few lots that were available were constrained by existing site conditions such as streams, easements, and zoning regulations.

I am in support of this project for three reasons.

1. The city needs more housing. We have several friends who have been looking to move into Alexandria for years, but simply could not due to the limited availability of houses.
2. This home design is a truly innovative solution that creates an attractive home while thoughtfully maintaining access for neighbors and keeping a beautiful mature tree.
3. I understand that due to this creative design the project is only asking the council to review minor aspects of the project related to lot size and parking.

Respectfully,

Justin Reynolds  
3970 Fort Worth Ave.

---

**DISCLAIMER:** This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

10  
1-20-24

3 Minute Speaker Outline:

I wish to express my opposition to the Special Use Permit at 404A E Alexandria Avenue (SUP #2023-00076, Docket #10 at the Jan 20th, 2024 City council meeting) and encourage you to vote against this SUP.

This SUP is in violation of City Building Code and is not consistent with street, neighborhood, or City building styles.

ADU without primary residence

Dramatically uncharacteristic lot size, width, and frontage

Nonconformity with Del Ray Neighborhood Residential Pattern Book

This SUP is not consistent with Zoning for Housing / Housing for All (Z4H/H4A).

There has not been sufficient outreach and discussion with the immediately impacted neighbors.

This construction on this lot will be exceptionally difficult and potentially dangerous to complete.

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

RE:  
City Council Public Hearing  
Docket No. 10

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am the owner and Architect for the vacant lot at 404A East Alexandria Ave. My family and I moved to Alexandria twelve years ago. For the first few years, and then in 2017 we built a house in the West End of Alexandria, and now we saw this opportunity to continue our investment and involvement in this community.

We are here for a Special Use Permit to confirm that this is a buildable lot. It has never been classified as a non-buildable lot. No previous owner has ever had a hearing to determine if it is buildable or not. The lot was created in 1931 as a legal lot. When it was created there was to be a street built along the east property line called Fourth St. For some reason this street was never built and throughout the last 90 years, the zoning regulations have changed. However, since it was created legally, this may be determined to be a buildable lot with the approval of this SUP.

The SUP is requesting three things:

1. Build on a sub-standard lot,
2. Reduce the required two parking spaces to one parking space.
3. Build on a lot with no street frontage,

#### SUB-STANDARD LOT

The latest zoning restriction for a lot in the R2-5 zone requires a lot to be 5,000 square feet and this lot is 2,661 square feet. As can be seen on page three of our presentation the adjacent lots range between 1,200 square feet and 9,600 square feet. This is common throughout the Del Ray neighborhood. The 2,661 square feet lot falls within the characteristics of this neighborhood.

#### REDUCE PARKING

This lot allows the space for two off-street parking spaces. However, the Transportation and Environmental Services (TES) suggested we request reduced parking due to the proximity of the bus and metro lines in the enhanced transit area. Due to their suggestions, we requested reduced parking for only one off-street parking. We don't believe this is an issue as in December of 2023 TES reduced the requirements to zero parking spaces required for homes within the enhanced transit areas.

#### NO STREET FRONTAGE

This is a unique lot within the Del Ray neighborhood and the city of Alexandria. Pages one and two of our presentation show only sixteen (16) vacant properties within the city that are classified as

residential, not owned by the city, not being used as a parking lot, or owned by the adjacent neighbor. Of those vacant lots, only three have no street frontage. The approval of this SUP will not set a precedent.

The neighbor's concerns on this subject are as follows:

1. Where will a delivery driver park? If they park on Mt. Vernon Ave it is in the same condition as the houses on that street as none of those homes have driveways. We can also recommend that they park on E. Alexandria Ave. which has more curb space. The approval of this SUP will not adversely impact this existing condition.
2. What will the vision clearance be for cars pulling out of an alley? This is an existing condition that the homes at 1411 and 1413 Mt. Vernon Ave must conform to. As seen in the site photos this has been maintained properly. In addition, three cars already park in this alley regularly. This SUP is only adding one car. The approval of this SUP will not adversely impact this existing condition.
3. How is this compatible if there are no alley lots in this area? Compatibility does not mean aesthetics. This is not part of the discussion for this SUP as this is not required to go in front of the Board of Architectural Review. What compatibility means in this unique case is if the R2-5 zoning bulk regulations are met. The massing conforms to all development standards such as setbacks, height restrictions, FAR, and other R2-5 zoning requirements. Even with these restrictions that are meant for larger lots, we were able to provide a creative solution to show that a home is feasible to occupy this lot. By adhering to the zoning bulk regulations the approval of this SUP will not adversely impact this neighborhood.

I believe we have met the requirements to show that these three requests for a sub-standard lot, reduced parking, and no street frontage are acceptable and this SUP may be approved.

Now that we have addressed the issues with the SUP, I want to respond to the neighbor's concerns with the building permits and construction process. We have taken these comments seriously and made numerous design decisions based on these comments.

I mailed letters to all twelve adjacent neighbors at the end of October that we were holding a meeting at the lot on November 2nd to show them the proposed plans, 3D images, and to view the project in virtual reality. The letter provided my email and phone number in case someone was not able to attend so that we could arrange an additional meeting at the site or through Zoom. Seven neighbors attended from five of the homes. One neighbor who could not attend and rents their house emailed me and we communicated through email.

These were their concerns at that meeting and how we moved forward.

1. The owner of 1409 Mt. Vernon Ave (lot 25 on page 14 of our presentation) uses the alley to drive to their rear yard and park their car. The design does not propose a fence along this side yard and provides pervious paving for 7' on the lot so that they can use this space to maneuver



into their rear yard. This is not a requirement and is done solely for the benefit of these homeowners.

2. The Silver Maple tree is beloved by the neighborhood and they do not want to see it gone. We agree. In the initial design, the basement extended to the east property line which would have killed the tree's root system. After hearing the neighbor's concerns and speaking to the city's landscape architect we hired a certified arborist to tell us what was possible to develop on this lot without causing harm to the tree. On pages 32 and 33 of our presentation, their report and plans are detailed. The Silver Maple is labeled as tree 1 east of the lot. The structural root zone (SRZ) is 22' from the trunk. There were two options. The first was to remove the tree and pay a \$2,500 fine and the second was to redesign the basement. We heard the neighbor's concerns and revised the basement plan as shown on page 15 of our presentation. The exterior and interior walls are an additional foot from the SRZ. By making this change the house loses 240 square feet of livable space. Even though the house has lost monetary value we moved forward with this decision. We will protect the Silver Maple.
3. How will the new house affect the light and air on the adjacent properties? A shading study was provided as shown on pages 27 to 29 of our presentation. The study shows the conditions at the winter and summer solstice. This study does not consider any of the existing trees. The only time the proposed house causes shading to a few rear yards along Mount Vernon Ave. is in the morning of the winter solstice. This is possible because the massing of the house conforms to all zoning bulk regulations such as the numerous setbacks, height restrictions, and is located to the north of most of the properties.
4. How the electrical wires that run over the lot be affected? Following the meeting, we reached out to Dominion to understand our options. We have spoken with Mr. Williams of Dominion who stated that they will provide a design to remedy the situation, however, they require a \$1,500 deposit to start, and the construction should be done within six months of the final design. If the SUP is approved this will be the first item to be undertaken so that any wires will be moved before construction starts.

On November 7<sup>th</sup> we presented our design and some of these changes to the Del Ray Citizen Association (DRCA). At this meeting, we recognized that there were three additional items of concern.

1. How will this development affect the stormwater? Per TES any new construction cannot increase the burden of runoff water. There are two strategies that the city accepts. The first is if the property is less than 100' from the street then a direct connection may be made to the stormwater drain and the second is to provide a catch basin on the property. Either of these options will either improve or maintain the status quo of stormwater runoff. The proposed roofs equal 890 square feet which will be drained directly to the storm drain or the catch basin. The 396 square foot green roof above the basement will drain directly to the storm drain or catch basin. The rest of the 1,375 square foot lot will be softscape and allow for percolation. Any water draining near the house will flow to the sump pump and drain to the stormwater system or catch basin. This will be designed by a licensed civil engineer and approved by TES.

2. How will the fire department access the house? The fire department reviewed the plans and is aware that the front door is 107' from the curb, which is more than the 100' allowed. A code modification will be required and may be offset by providing fire sprinklers and one or two hour fire rated materials. This will have to be addressed during the building permit phase. In looking at other houses along E. Alexandria Ave. and the Del Ray neighborhood there are numerous instances where garage or accessory dwelling units have been built which are much further than 100' from the street curb. For example, the house at 408 E. Alexandria Ave. has a garage and ADU almost 150' from the street curb. This structure can be seen in photo 3 on page 9 of our presentation.
3. Finally, how is our design aesthetics relatable to Del Ray housing? As stated at the beginning this is not a requirement to determine if this is a buildable lot. In theory, the house could be all glass or a concrete box. There is no Architectural Design Review required and this is not in a historic district.

Even though that is the case we did take into consideration the fabric of Del Ray and how it has progressed throughout the last 200 years. This is a modern take on what could come next. New construction is not supposed to copy or mimic a style. Rather it is to compliment what has come before. According to the DRCA they recognize seven styles of houses within the Del Ray Neighborhood. This doesn't even take into consideration all the other styles for commercial or multi-family buildings.

Those styles are as follows and what inspiration we took from them:

- a. Italianate, 1840 – 1885, Full-width front porch,
- b. Queen Anne, 1880 – 1910,
- c. Folk Victorian, 1780 – 1910, Simple front doors and roof form,
- d. Craftsman Bungalow, 1905 – 1930, asphalt shingles on gable roof and wood siding,
- e. Colonial Revival, 1880 – 1955, rectangular shape, brick, multi-pane glazing,
- f. American Foursquare, 1900 – 1930, full-width front porch
- g. Tudor Revival, 1890 - 1940

This lot is adjacent to two very different styles of architecture. Colonial row homes along Mt. Vernon Ave and oversized Craftsman Bungalow homes for the west half of E. Alexandria Ave and then typical Craftsman Bungalows on the east half.

This house complements both styles by using certain features. This can be seen on page 41 of our presentation. For example, brick siding was used to complement the homes along Mt. Vernon Ave, but we also integrated wood-like fiber cement siding to visually appeal to the homes along E. Alexandria Ave. A few more features are the rectangular shape, the gable roof, the porch steps, and the multi-pane glazing.

This is a new construction which should be a product of its own time and not a replica of a historic past. Once again, we made changes to the design and asked the DRCA if we could present again. However, they denied this request on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

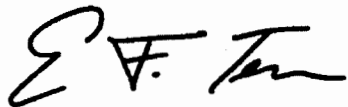
On January 4<sup>th</sup> we presented our SUP application to the Planning Commission and were approved 4 to 3. I believe the three commissioners who did not approve did not do so due to the proposal but that they wished we had done more neighbor outreach and suggested we defer the voting. I believe we did reach out to the neighbors as I have explained, we were open to communication and made numerous design changes based on their concerns.

Seven speakers spoke in opposition to our SUP, however, we only spoke to two beforehand even though the rest had my phone number and email. One of those neighbors is the owner of 1409 Mt. Vernon Ave., and as mentioned above we adjusted our design so that they can still park their car in their rear yard. We were surprised that they were now in opposition because, after our neighbor outreach meeting on November 2nd, they were happy that we thought of them and their needs. The other neighbor that we spoke to is the owner of 408 E. Alexandria Ave. which is the house furthest away. We have spoken to him three times while we visited the site and each time, he told us that we will never have anything approved on this lot, that no one will support it, that nothing will ever be built, and this lot is unbuildable. It is difficult to work with a neighbor if they want nothing built.

Zoning for Housing was recently approved 7 to 0 on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to expand Alexandria's housing production, improve affordability, and address past and current barriers to equitable housing access. As stated in the Zoning for Housing single-family homes do not mandate them to be affordable to specific income levels. This home will address the housing production portion of Zoning for Housing on an existing legally created vacant lot.

We believe that this SUP application meets all the requirements for a sub-standard lot with no street frontage and reduced parking. We believe we reached out to the neighbors and made numerous design changes to address their concerns. We believe that there are very few vacant lots left in the city of Alexandria and this is a creative solution to add much needed housing to the city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. F. Teran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Eric F. Teran  
Architect, LEED AP BD+C  
202-569-9620  
eteran@eustilus.com

10  
1-20-24

**CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov**

---

**From:** Elizabeth Schaefer <elizabeth.m.schaefer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 19, 2024 1:26 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby; Will Xmas  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Public Hearing 1/20- 404A Letter of Support

Some people who received this message don't often get email from elizabeth.m.schaefer@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

RE:  
City Council Public Hearing  
Docket No. 10

Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

I write as a resident of the 200 block of E. Alexandria Avenue, a client of Eustilus Architecture, and also, as a friend with insight into the character of the Teran-Gross family.

My husband and I have lived in Del Ray for over 10 years. What brought us here was the sense of community and charm of the neighborhood. As we hoped, our neighbors here have felt like a co-op, a village, and at times, a family. We have enjoyed sharing Del Ray with Eric and Daniela, residents of West Alexandria. They've joined us for the Halloween Parade, Art on the Avenue, and caroling on Luray/ Christmas Card Lane, as well as multiple family parties with the neighbors.

Daniela and Eric are exactly the kind of community-minded people that we moved to Del Ray to have as neighbors. They first came into our lives through Fairlington Preschool as Covid hit. When four families bubbled to create a homeschool, the Teran-Gross family quickly said that they would host and turned their space into an outdoor preschool for a year. Through the years, any time that we have needed help, whether it's home maintenance, birthday parties, or childcare, Daniela and Eric have been the first to show up. It is the very core of who they are. Although owning in Del Ray, as a resident or landlord, does not require any level of participating, in my in-depth experience with them, I can promise that they will be stand-out neighbors, taking excellent care of their property and willing listeners to neighbor's concerns, as I believe that they've already demonstrated in this process.

As I stated, we've also had the privilege to work with Eustilus in a professional setting. As our family grew to five, we considered moving to another area, but opted for a major renovation. Through this process, I had the opportunity to see the professional side of our friends. They take great pride in their work, are deeply knowledgeable about architecture and design, well-oriented to building in the city of Alexandria, and were honest, upfront, and open-minded as we navigated the bumpy road of renovation. When we first met with Eric, I told him that the house should maintain the character of the neighborhood which is mainly craftsman bungalow

homes. Through thoughtful design and listening to our needs Eric was able to design a home that met all our aspirations. Even though the home expanded in size, it complements the nearby homes allowing a seamless transition from one neighbor to the next. With knowledge and interest in green architecture, Eric also designed our home in a way that minimized our carbon footprint and maintained maximum green space. With our home now remodeled, we have no plans of leaving the Del Ray area anytime soon.

Although the house that Eustilus designed at 404A E. Alexandria Ave would not be my first choice for the style of a home in this area, the process has demonstrated the thoughtfulness and community-mindedness that I've always known them for. Since the property does not front Mt. Vernon Ave. or E. Alexandria Ave, they've made intentional considerations that it blend in size, height, and color, as well as protecting the beautiful tree on the adjacent property. I appreciate how they used certain features from the various styles of Del Rey houses and incorporated them into the design. It doesn't copy but enhances these features into today's architecture. Most developers would not have made such thoughtful decisions. It is a unique style, but it is also a unique lot.

Eric and his team have been considerate and thoughtful in providing a design that fits within the zoning regulations. My sense is that the concerns are less about how the lot will be developed and more aggravation that the lot exists at all. The lot does exist, however, and the Teran-Gross family has continued to follow all the correct procedures to make it livable, something no one else has been able to do while the city scrambles for increased housing. Part of choosing Del Ray over an HOA community has been the trust that our neighbors will be respectful, caring, and community-minded in their decisions. Eric and Daniela are, in every interaction over the past 4 years, all of those things. We can only hope that they feel welcome and will make the long-term decision to join our community themselves when their family is ready.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Schaefer  
213 E. Alexandria Ave

---

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

10  
1-20-24

**CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov**

---

**From:** Pete Balas <pbalas312@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 19, 2024 2:43 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing Docket No. 10

Some people who received this message don't often get email from pbalas312@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers,

I have lived in Alexandria City for seven years and worked in Alexandria city for twenty+ years. I have been neighbors with the applicants, Eric Teran and Daniela Gross since 2017. I saw them build their house on a vacant lot and it went smoothly and was built quickly. The house was a great addition to the neighborhood. I'm excited to hear that they are investing in Alexandria by buying another vacant lot and trying to build a home.

As we all know, there is an extreme housing shortage in Alexandria. Any opportunity to create new housing while respecting the zoning regulations should be applauded. My understanding is that this special use permit application requests three exceptions which are a sub-standard lot, reduced parking, and no street frontage. While this may not be common the presentation shows that the proposed home respects the zoning bulk regulations and is considerate to the neighbors.

I'm in full support of this special use permit being approved.

Sincerely,  
Peter Balas  
5445 Fillmore Ave.

---

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

10  
1-20-24

**CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov**

---

**From:** Dave Hellman <lazlodaddy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 18, 2024 6:24 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Letter in support of SUP2023-00076, docket item 24-1760

You don't often get email from lazlodaddy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

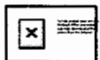
**This letter supports the proposed development as Summarized in SUP2023-00076, docket item 24-1760.**

We reside at 407 E Nelson Avenue and the front of the main structure documented in this application directly faces our backyard. From our perspective, the building to be constructed on this lot is consistent with other structures in the immediate area, including our own. Although the application may not be fully compliant with the Zoning Ordinance, its size and parking needs seem consistent with other exceptions that have been made for nearby properties. For example, the neighboring home at 408 E Alexandria has a curb cut on city property that the owner uses for parking. 408 E. Alexandria also has an outbuilding that is the same size as the main structure in this proposal. This outbuilding also blocks an alley at the northeast corner of the parcel. We have no objections to these exceptions at 408 E. Alexandria or those made for any of the other nearby properties. There has been **a lot** of development and improvements on this block. We therefore feel it is fair and consistent for the same consideration to be applied to this new dwelling.

We appreciate that the applicant specifically reached out multiple times to us and our neighbors to keep us informed of their intentions. We welcome the potential of new neighbors in our immediate area and the diversity in housing this proposal offers.

Thank you for considering our opinion in your deliberation and for your service to our city.

Mr. and Mrs. David Hellman  
407 E. Nelson Ave



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

---

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

10  
1-20-24

**CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov**

---

**From:** Amalea Hajar <ahijar@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 18, 2024 6:44 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Cc:** Rachel M Drescher; Karl Moritz; Tony LaColla; Sam Shelby  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]City Council Public Hearing, Docket No. 10

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ahijar@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am writing in support of the SUP to build a home on the currently vacant lot located at 404A E. Alexandria Avenue. Since purchasing my first home—a condo in Auburn Village—in 2006, I have witnessed the transformation of Del Ray and the City of Alexandria. I am not only an Alexandria homeowner, but also a business owner and member of the Del Ray Business Association. My husband's business is also based in Alexandria, in North Old Town, where we own additional property. Del Ray is a special gem in the DMV, but one that has become increasingly out of reach for many to not only play and work in, but also live. In fact, none of our employees live in Alexandria. Of course, the Council is aware of our housing challenges, and it's why the Zoning for Housing proposal passed unanimously in November.

It is in that same spirit that I support this SUP. In reviewing the application, I see a modest home, with a design that is thoughtful and considerate of its neighbors, on a typical-sized lot for the neighborhood. This is a great opportunity to convert a vacant lot into a beautiful home, allowing us to welcome new neighbors and make the dream of homeownership in Alexandria a reality for them.

Sincerely,

Amalea Hajar  
Owner  
3C Auburn Ct and 801 N. Pitt St

---

**DISCLAIMER:** This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.  
**DO NOT CLICK** any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.



Dear City Councilmembers:

We write to express our opposition to the Special Use Permit (“SUP”) application regarding 404A East Alexandria Avenue (SUP, #2023-00076, Docket #10 at the January 20, 2024, City Council meeting). This application does not conform with Alexandria Zoning for Housing and City Building Codes. The application has also subverted important community engagement processes and fails to account for the substantial impacts that this unique property will have on numerous adjoining neighbors. For the reasons set forth below we respectfully request that you reject this application.

### **1. The application violates Alexandria’s Zoning Ordinance**

The application is in direct violation of at least two regulations under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria (“Zoning Ordinance”). First, Article VII, § 7-203(B)(6) states that, for an accessory dwelling unit (“ADU”) to be permissible, “the owner of the property shall maintain the property as their primary residence at the time the permit . . . is issued.” The proposed building plan is a two-story single family dwelling with an ADU. The applicants have maintained that they do not plan to use the property as their primary residence. Accordingly, the proposal does not conform with the City’s zoning requirements for ADU’s and the application should be rejected on this ground alone.

Second, the application violates the Zoning Ordinance at Article III, § 3-505 related to R-2-5/Single and two-family because it does not meet the minimum lot size requirements. § 3-505 specifies the following in relevant part:

- *Lot size.* Each principal use shall be located on a lot with a minimum land area of 5,000 square feet, except in the case of a corner lot in which case the minimum land area shall be 6,500 square feet. § 3-505(A)(1)
- *Lot frontage.* The minimum lot frontage at the front lot line shall be 40 feet, except in the case of a two-family semi-detached dwelling, in which case the minimum lot frontage shall be 37.5 feet for each dwelling unit. § 3-505(C).

The lot is 2,600 square feet and therefore fails to meet the minimum lot size requirements of 5,000 feet under § 3-505(A)(1). The lot also does not possess any lot frontage contemplated by § 3-505(C), as it occurs in an alley surrounded by existing dwellings. The Staff acknowledges that this would be the only developed lot in Del Ray without frontage. Notably, the previous property owners inquired about building on the property and the Director of Planning and Zoning at the time made an official determination that the lot did not possess the buildable street frontage, and the property was previously determined unbuildable by the City. Accordingly the proposal fails to meet the minimum lot frontage requirements.

The proposal should be rejected based on noncompliance with the City’s Zoning Code.

### **2. The applicants failed to initiate the proper community engagement processes**

The City Council should also consider the lack of consultation with the affected neighbors. Communication from the applicants was limited to a one-time and one-sided dialogue. The applicants did not solicit feedback or engage with community members about their concerns related to the project.

Our residence at 404 East Alexandria Ave, for example, will be uniquely impacted by the dwelling’s construction. The address of the proposed structure is 404A East Alexandria Ave. The property confusingly possesses the appearance of being an ADU to our residence at 404 East Alexandria Ave. Access to 404A East Alexandria is via Mount Vernon Avenue pursuant to the proposed plan for access. In fact, vehicles can’t fit through the alley via East Alexandria Avenue. This inconsistency creates a dangerous confusion that will interfere with our use and enjoyment of our residence. The applicants have not consulted with us to ensure that potential confusion (*i.e.* mail, deliveries, and short-term renters) that the apparent shared address will create.

Further, it appears that the current proposal diverges from the original filing, which the impacted neighbors only learned through public filings. The impacted community was never given an opportunity to voice concerns to the applicant or the City Planning Commission until the January 4, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting regarding whether the project should move forward – a step in the process too late for the applicant or commission to properly evaluate alternatives.

The lack of consultation and transparency with us and the other surrounding residents underscores the rushed nature of the proposal. At a minimum, the council should defer a decision on the project so that the impacted residents can be consulted with.

### **3. The application fails to account for environmental impacts**

As stated by others impacted residents, the hydrologic formation under the lot results in large quantities of water being diverted from our residences via highly active sump pumps. Our sump pump for instance runs almost constantly during rain events and its frequent use requires substantial maintenance and repair. The proposal does not account for the diversion of water and impact to Hooff’s Run and our homes’ infrastructure. An environmental review of this impact should be conducted before the City Council considers whether to approve the project.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that you reject the the proposal under SUP, #2023-00076.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonah and Sarah Brown  
404 East Alexandria Ave, Alexandria, VA, 22301