



March 3, 2025

Karl W. Moritz, Director  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
City of Alexandria  
City Hall, Room 2100  
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Special Use Permit #2024-00089  
1913 Mount Vernon Avenue, Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden

Dear Mr. Moritz,

The Del Ray Citizens Association (“DRCA”) Executive Board (the “Board”) and Land Use Committee (“LUC”) (collectively, “we”) voted to support the SUP application for Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden.

Mr. Portlance recently purchased and reinvigorated the beloved Del Ray Hardware store on Mt. Vernon Avenue, immediately adjacent to the future Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden property. He has quickly integrated into the unique small-town business community within Del Ray. His business greatly contributes to the vibrancy of our walkable business corridor, offering many products and services that help our residents thrive. Because of this track record of excellence and the reasonableness of the request here, the DRCA Board and LUC offer their strong recommendation of approval of this SUP application for Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden.

We reviewed the SUP application and staff’s recommendation to approve it, along with staff’s conditions—all of which we find to be in keeping with the spirit and direction of the Planning Commission’s and City Council’s priorities. Although our internal processes precluded a full association vote on this SUP, we agreed that it was imperative that we send our support of this business representing the Land Use Committee and Executive Board.

As you may recall, Del Ray once hosted a garden center business in the space that is now The Garden, the restaurant. Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden will bring a much needed





staple back to the neighborhood, providing a synergistic offering with the neighboring Del Ray Hardware store. Small businesses like Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden are vital to the neighborhood and help make it the economic engine for Alexandria that it is today.

As we stated above, we found staff's recommendations on the approval of this SUP to be reasonable and in keeping with the overall vision of the Mount Vernon Avenue Business Area Plan overlay district of the Potomac West Small Area Plan. While it is apparently possible that parking spaces could be rented elsewhere, we feel they are unnecessary under these circumstances. As staff recognizes in its report, the business is located in a "walkable location in the heart of the relatively dense Del Ray neighborhood" and has "access to driving alternatives."

For these reasons, we strongly recommend approval of the SUP request for Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden. We hope that you will keep this feedback in mind as you craft the final recommendations to Council.

Sincerely,

Tim Laderach  
President, DRCA

Monica Parry, DRCA LUC Co-Chair  
Lisa Lettieri, DRCA LUC Co-Chair

cc: D. Jason Portlance  
Owner, Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden

Ann Horowitz,  
Principal Planner, Land Use Services

Tony LaColla  
Chief, Land Use Services

**From:** Katie Waynick <kfwaynick@gmail.com>

Letter #2

**Sent:** Sunday, March 2, 2025 11:50 PM

**To:** Karl Moritz <Karl.Moritz@alexandriava.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Support for 1913 Mount Vernon Avenue, Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden

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RE: Special Use Permit #2024-00089  
1913 Mount Vernon Avenue, Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden

Dear Mr. Moritz,

I'm writing in strong support of the proposed market and garden at 1913 Mt. Vernon Avenue.

In a time when many small businesses are closing and there are CRE vacancies all around, I have so much respect for Mr. Portlance for saving one beloved local business and now revamping its neighbor into something so exciting and uniquely "Del Ray".

During my time here I have been involved in advocacy work both as an individual and as a board member of the local neighborhood association. I have seen my share of fights over land use issues and helped guide the neighborhood through the tumultuous arena discussions. During that time, the number of SUPs that garnered widespread acceptance and excitement with limited negative feedback could be counted on one hand. From my conversations with others, Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden is one of those unique SUPs amassing widespread local support. For many, the loss of Nature by Design was a major blow to the neighborhood. Allowing a business like this along the Avenue not only fills a desperate gap in the market but does so in an area that will allow many to walk directly from their homes. My husband is already talking about taking the kids and a wagon up the street to stock up for spring.

Small businesses like Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden not only provide locals with a walkable alternative to big box stores, they also provide the backbone of our community. Since taking over the hardware store, Mr. Portlance has become a huge supporter of our local business association and the wide array of community events and initiatives they support. Businesses who give their time and energy in this way are the types of small business that are vital to the neighborhood, contributing not only financially, but also directly to the character of the community itself.

It is because of businesses like this that so many walk the Avenue and stop into our restaurants; indeed, they are the heart of the neighborhood. And I can think of no better proposal to move into 1913 Mount Vernon Avenue than the one before you today.

Please vote to approve this SUP.

Sincerely,

Katherine Waynick  
Del Ray Resident



March 3, 2025

Alexandria Planning Commission

301 King Street, Room 2400

Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the Del Ray Business Association to express our strong support for the Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden's Special Use Permit (#2024-00089) for a permit for a parking reduction at the upcoming Planning Commission meeting scheduled for March 4, 2025. As a coalition of business owners and stakeholders in our community, we recognize the important role Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden will play in enhancing our local economy and community vibrancy.

Since taking over ownership of the Del Ray Hardware Store in 2023, owner Jay Portlance has consistently demonstrated a commitment to quality and service. His innovative approach and dedication to customer satisfaction have not only set them apart but have also contributed positively to our area's unique character of a small business community. His presence has encouraged local spending, created job opportunities, and provided a welcoming atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

We believe that the proposed zoning changes will benefit the Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden and enhance the overall landscape of our community. By allowing for the parking exemption, we can ensure that our local businesses, like the Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden, continue to thrive and adapt to the evolving needs of our residents. This alignment with contemporary business practices is essential for fostering economic growth while maintaining a balanced community environment.

Additionally, Jay Portlance has shown an unwavering commitment to supporting local initiatives, including community events, charities, and partnerships with other community groups. Their engagement has helped cultivate a sense of belonging and collaboration within our community, which is something that we, as a business association, highly value and encourage.

In conclusion, we urge the commission to support the zoning changes for the Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden as it promises numerous benefits not just for the business itself, but for the broader community. We are confident that with the support of the Planning



Commission, the Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden can open and contribute positively to our local economy and culture.

Thank you for considering our position on this matter. We look forward to the opportunity to support Del Ray Farmhouse Market & Garden and contribute to our community's continued growth and development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Fisher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lauren" being more prominent than the last name "Fisher".

Lauren Fisher, PsyD

President, Del Ray Business Association