

15
3-12-22

Gloria Sitton

From: Paul Hunter <paul.hunter@craefte.com>
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2022 1:16 PM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: Re: Full Support for Oakville Block C2 Park

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

Please feel free to share our letter of support to the Mayor and to the developer, and highlight our support for Block C plans, which is right behind our house.

Sincerely

Paul and Gena
2509 E Randolph Ave
Alexandria, VA 22301

703-447-7423

Sent from ProtonMail for iOS

On Fri, Feb 18, 2022 at 5:58 PM, Paul Hunter <paul.hunter@craefte.com> wrote:

Our house backs onto the Oakville Triangle project and we have been a part of the planning process for close to 7 years (or more). **We appreciate all the public outreach and communication that your team, Stonebridge and the City of Alexandria has provided to date.**

We are very happy with the current plans, especially Mt Jefferson Park where we will be able to walk in all seasons and want to say thank you for allowing us to provide input over the years. We are very excited to see that the project has finally started, and look forward to seeing the finished product in a few years. **Our daughter will finally have a place to play and run that is close to our house.**

We do NOT support making any further changes to the plans and will not be able to attend the public hearing on March 1, 2022.

Thanks again for everything you and the City have done to make our quality of life better.

Sincerely

Paul Hunter and Gena Alexa

2509 E Randolph Ave

Alexandria, VA 22301

Paul Hunter
703-447-7423
paul.hunter@craefte.com

www.craefte.com

Sent from ProtonMail for iOS

Mayor Wilson and Members of City Council,

My name is David Fromm and I have lived adjacent to the Mt. Jefferson Park for 30 years.

In April 2014, I was appointed as At-Large Member of Oakville Triangle & Route 1 Design Guidelines Advisory Group. One of the results of that planning effort was a development site plan for the Mt. Jefferson Park, which I supported, was approved by the Planning Commission on 7 January 2016.

Figure 1 shows Mt. Jefferson Park design adjacent to Park Road which becomes Block C Park.

Quoting from the *2015 Neighborhood Parks Improvement Plan*:

Topographical berms, 3' in height with some evergreen plantings will provide a buffer between the new development and the existing park. Additional buffering and screening measures will be taken to better insulate the park from the Oakville Triangle development. Trees planted between the park and the new road within Oakville Triangle will be planted in groupings, or groves, and not linearly, so as to maintain the naturalized feel of the park.

Paraphrasing from the 2016 Staff Report: Staff was sensitive to the community's interest in preserving/replicating the existing secluded, forested naturalistic character of Mt Jefferson Park: a natural urban retreat.

On 3 October 2019, the Planning Commission renewed the plan. Early 2020 things changed. Oakville's developer consolidated open space adjacent to Mt. Jefferson Park. Planning efforts began, soliciting input from the community for the ~3/4 acre parcel.

At the Oakville Triangle Meeting #2 Community Responses of 30 April 2020, I wrote "Since the City is getting 3/4 of an acre that can be programmed, perhaps more of the current natural trail adjacent to the existing residential can remain natural. Providing/maintaining habitat corridors is a good thing."

Figure 2 shows the resulting preferred Option #2 which basically maintains the 2016 design for Mt. Jefferson Park. The Block C Park design minimally encroaches as connections to the Mt. Jefferson trails. The buffering between Mt. Jefferson Park and the Oakville development is maintained.

12 March 2022

Due to the pandemic and the aftermath of the Presidential election, I missed four emails requesting input concerning a new Block C Park design and I am sorry I did. Figure 3 from the November 19 2020 meeting of the Park & Recreation Commission shows the new design which encroaches more into Mt Jefferson Park. The buffering was being eroded. The secluded, forested naturalistic character of Mt Jefferson Park now has sight lines into it.

From November 19 2020 till Winter of 2021, "Applicant to further refine park design through development site plan review process". Figure 4 shows that result. The Block C Park design continued encroachments that were begun in Figure 3, and that design is incomplete without those encroachments.

Now after being civically active for over 20 years, I must admit I'm embarrassed that I did not know that changes to a Final Site Plan may be made administratively if they are considered a minor change to the site plan. Figure 5 highlights these "minor changes": less buffering, additional hardscape paths, more expansive sight lines into Mt. Jefferson Park, a more formal and less naturalistic design. I don't believe that the community members that contributed to the original Mt. Jefferson design would consider them to be "minor changes".

From November 2020 to October 2021, city staff and the applicant had over a year to solicit public comment but did not. I ask that the City Council direct staff to restore the Mt Jefferson Park design to be more consistent with its original, natural intent. If not, then at least address who will be responsible for the care and maintenance of the appropriated section of Mt. Jefferson Park.

Sincerely,

David Fromm
alsdmf@earthlink.net
2307 E Randolph Ave

Figure 1



Portion of planned Mt Jefferson Park adjacent to future Block C Park

PC Hearing: January 7, 2016

DOCKET ITEM #4: Development Site Plan #2015-0025 2300 Jefferson Davis Highway & 300 Block of East Raymond Avenue – Mount Jefferson Park Improvements

On a motion by Commissioner Wasowski, seconded by Commissioner Macek, the Planning Commission voted to approve Development Site Plan #2015-0025. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

PC Hearing: October 3, 2019

DOCKET ITEM #6: Development Site Plan #2018-0026 2300 Jefferson Davis Highway & 300 Block of East Raymond Avenue – Mount Jefferson Park Improvements

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair Wasowski, the Planning Commission voted to approve of Development Site Plan #2018-0026, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Figure 2

September 24, 2020
Oakville Triangle Plan
Public Open Space Design Concepts

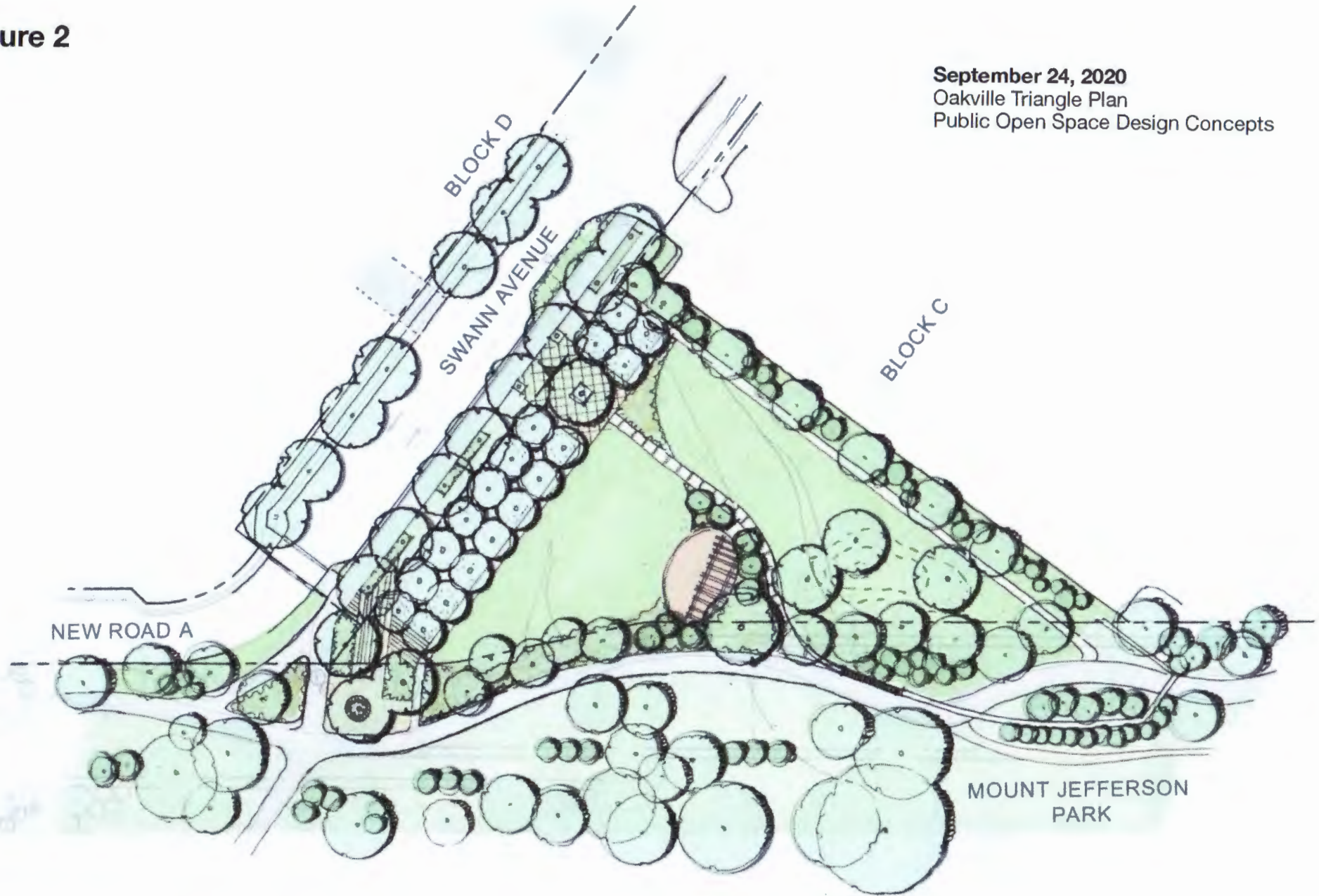


Figure 3

November 19, 2020
Oakville Triangle Plan
Revised Park Design
Park & Recreation Commission



Figure 4



October 21, 2021

Oakville Triangle Block C Park Design
Park and Recreation Commission
Endorsed Proposed Concept

PC Hearing: March 1, 2022

DOCKET ITEM #7: DSUP #2021-10015
345 Swann Avenue, Oakville Triangle Block C -
Publicly Accessible Park
PC approved plan 6-0-1.

Figure 5

6 December 2021

Final Site Plan for Mount Jefferson Park Improvements

Red box shows changes to Mt Jefferson Park Plan that were approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning and the Chairman of the Planning Commission. There was no discernible public process or hearing because none is required if the changes are "minor".

| | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|
| APPROVED | | |
| DEVELOPMENT SITE PLAN DISUP2018-0026 | | |
| DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING | | |
| AEF for K. Moritz | 12/6/2021 | |
| DIRECTOR | DATE | |
| DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | | |
| SITE PLAN NO. | 12/22/2021 | |
| DIRECTOR | DATE | |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | 12/6/2021 | |
| CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION | DATE | |
| DATE RECORDED | | |
| INSTRUMENT NO. | DEED BOOK NO. | PAGE NO. |

MT. JEFFERSON PARK

Dear Mr. Mayor and other members of the City Council,

March 7, 2022

On March 12, you'll review the DSUP2021-10015 Site Plan for **Oakville Block C Park** that was approved at the 3-1-22 Planning Commission meeting with "conditions." The conditions stem from concerns raised by about 30 community members through letters and testimony to the Commission. The concerns are about impacts to the character of the adjoining Mt. Jefferson Park, which already serves as a haven for people enjoying the natural assets (fresh air, birds, cooler microclimate) in a forested setting.

Reviewing the history of public commentary regarding the Mt. Jefferson Park and to-be-developed Oakville Block C Park, we see an evolution away from priorities set forth during years of community engagement.

During the 2014 Mount Jefferson Park planning process, primary outcomes included to "retain the 'naturalistic' character of the park"; "consider widening the park and/or providing a buffer along the Oakville border"; and consider "rerout[ing] trail so that it doesn't look into houses." There appeared to be consensus that the forested, secluded nature of Mt. Jefferson Park should be safeguarded. Preserving the "character of the park" included: "Retain/enhance natural area for wildlife; Keep the topography, berm, and trail; Move the path from the top of the berm to the east side of the park at grade with Route 1; and Minimize noise from Route 1."

The 2015 Oakville Triangle Vision Plan was also explicit that a "key [community] priority for this section of Mount Jefferson Park was to maintain the character of the park to the extent possible." Community input shared in a later document included requests for "natural rather than manicured; landscaped rather than hardscape," (majority of respondents) and "vegetated green space as opposed to just simply a grass lawn/turf as there are plenty of those throughout the area," as well as "Purely grass parks and playgrounds will not do."

However, the two design concepts presented in the Sept. 24, 2020¹ Public Open Space Design for Oakville Triangle both fell short of these goals because the majority land area planned for Block C is turf grass field that fails to buffer the secluded, forested Mt. Jefferson Park from the impending higher density Oakville Triangle development. The designs are marginally "naturalistic," given the minimal habitat value of non-native grass.

Seven weeks later the modified Oakville Triangle Plan (Nov. 2020²) evolved further from the goals of maintaining the existing secluded, forested, naturalistic character of the adjacent Mt. Jefferson Park by:

- increasing sightlines along the boundary between the turf field and Park with less vegetation;
- adding more connections, thus sparser vegetation, through the southeastern corner of Block C.

The community response to this Nov. 2020 plan included "additional trees for shade and buffering."

A year later (Oct. 21, 2021³), "updates" to the Block C design that were shared in a Park & Recreation Commission meeting - but not vetted in a community engagement process - evolved further from safeguarding a secluded, naturalistic character of Mt. Jefferson Park for people/wildlife by:

- reducing vegetative cover in the southeastern corner of Block C in favor of additional, paved trails;
- **encroaching into Mt. Jefferson Park property with 2 paved loops and what appears to be a further reduction in vegetative cover along the paved loops.**

Indeed, the Oakville Triangle Developer described it as "buffering Swann Ave. with a formal tree planting," providing a main lawn with "direct connection to Mt. Jefferson Park," and providing "gardens" in southeast, all "knit together with Mt. Jefferson Park." He describes potential space for "performances" as well as the potential for food trucks on Swann Ave. While he describes the heavy vegetation buffering the east side of Block C from the parking lot, the vegetation along the west side of the lawn has been reduced in this update to have "no buffering there" for "integration" with the Park, which is exactly what we're concerned about.

We do not feel that those updated plans approved by the Planning Commission on 3-1-22 for Block C conform with the priorities of maintaining the expressed character of Mt. Jefferson Park for the following reasons:

- a significant increase in paved trails at the expense of vegetation;
- insufficient vegetation and buffering of the Park because of limited vegetation with few evergreen trees;

DSUP2021-10015 Site Plan for Oakville Block C Park

- high likelihood of noise, sound, and trash pollution in the Park due to weak buffering from Oakville Triangle;
- low ecological services value, such as regulation of local microclimate to the people of Alexandria (including new Oakville residents);

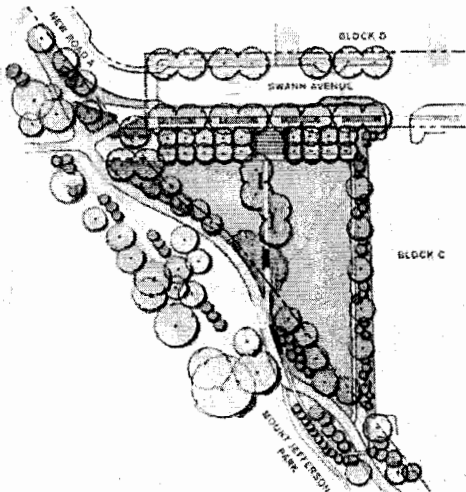
OVERALL, we see this design for Block C as a missed opportunity to leverage the adjoining open space of Block C to maintain or enhance the wild character of Mt. Jefferson Park and its value to the health and well-being of the people of Alexandria. Looking at the success of the restoration of Four-Mile-Run Stream as a model for human enjoyment and health, why do we assume that future Oakville residents wouldn't prefer a naturally cooled, wilder patch to enjoy songbirds, cleaner air, and a quieter refuge from Route 1 hubbub? Does an irrigated landscape dominated by a turf field with a paved trail directly abutting Mt. Jefferson Park really meet the City's sustainability goals?

Thank you for hearing our concerns relative to the approval of the DSUP2021-10015 Site Plan for Oakville Block C. We ask that approval of the Site Plan be deferred in favor of its reanalysis relative to maintaining the ecosystem values of Mt. Jefferson Park that were identified up front in the planning processes.

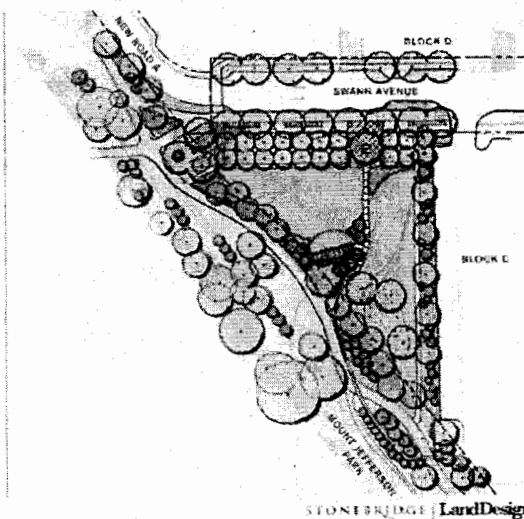
1 Sept. 24, 2020 (two options provided; right-hand preferred)

September 24, 2020
Oakville Triangle Plan
Public Open Space Design Concepts

DESIGN CONCEPT 1



DESIGN CONCEPT 2

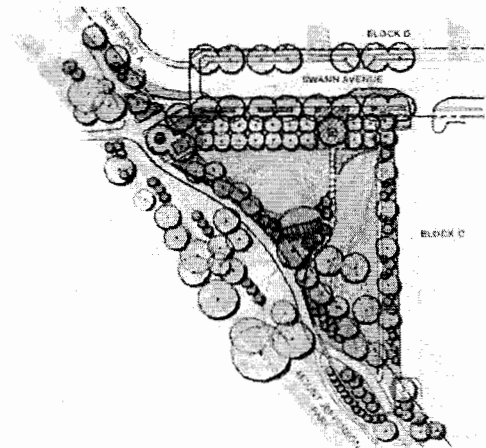


DSUP2021-10015 Site Plan for Oakville Block C Park

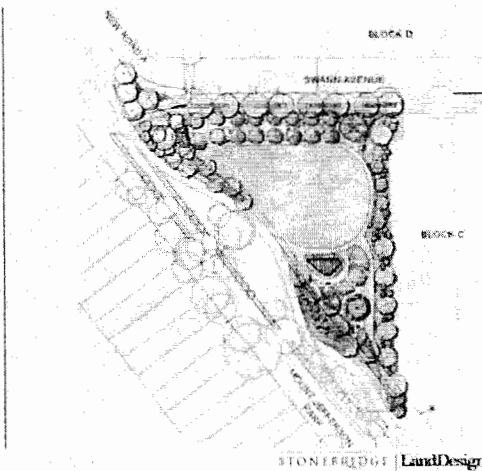
2 Nov. 19, 2020

November 19, 2020
Oakville Triangle Plan
Revised Park Design
Park & Recreation Commission

PREVIOUS CONCEPT



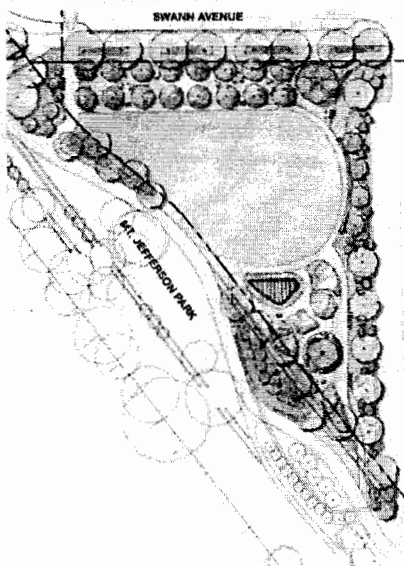
CURRENT CONCEPT



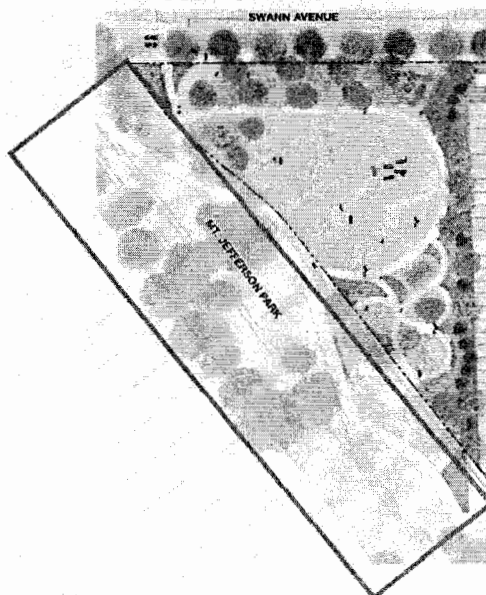
3 October 21, 2021 Approved by the Park and Recreation Commission [area of concern in red]

October 21, 2021
Oakville Triangle Block C Park Design
Park and Recreation Commission

PREVIOUS CONCEPT 11/19/2020



PROPOSED CONCEPT



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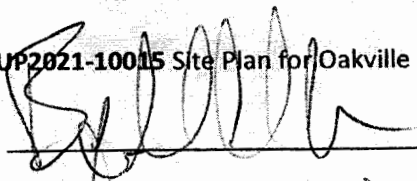
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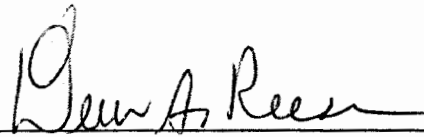
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ALEXANDRIA VA 22301

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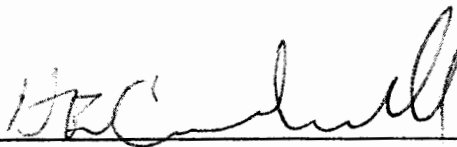
2311 East Randolph Ave

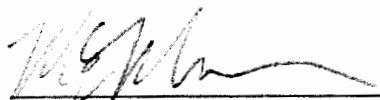
 Devin A. Reese 2401 E. Randolph Ave.

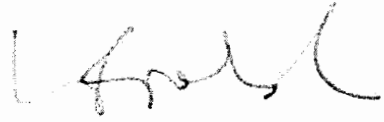
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 Henry E (Hal) Cardwell


 Matthew E. Mulder - 2403 E. Randolph Ave

 Laverne L. 2309 E. Randolph Ave

JAMES F. FITZGERALD James F. Fitzgerald 2505 E. Randolph Ave

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