

[EXTERNAL]April 7, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Comments re Subdivision  
#2022-00001

Barbra Byington <babyington@gmail.com>

Mon 4/4/2022 2:19 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

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Dear Planning Commission Members,

I live at (and am the property owner of) 108 Stewart Avenue in Del Ray. I have lived here since May 2009 and have been a resident of the City of Alexandria since 1993.

I attended the DRCA's March 8th Land Use Committee virtual meeting on the proposed subdivision #2022-00001 (105 and 107 East Randolph Avenue).

As the property owner directly behind the applied for change, I concur with the DRCA and Staff in their recommendation to deny the subdivision request to re-subdivide 105 and 107 E. Randolph Ave and create two new L shaped lots. As outlined in the Staff's report and the DRCA letter, the proposed new properties would not meet all of the zoning ordinance requirements. The proposed lots would not be in accordance with the Master Plan. Additionally, their proposed irregular shapes would deviate from the character of the historic lot layouts. Granting this type of atypical subdivision would also create a bad precedent that could be cited in future subdivision requests.

Thanks for your consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

Barbra Byington  
108 Stewart Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22301

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## [EXTERNAL]Planning Commission Regular Monthly Meeting on 4/7/2022

Jeremy Flachs <jeremy.flachs@flachslaw.com>

Tue 4/5/2022 8:52 PM

To: Nancy Williams <Nancy.Williams@alexandriava.gov>; PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: vchangdc@yahoo.com <vchangdc@yahoo.com>

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

Dear Planning Commission and Staff: I have signed up to speak, but never knowing if or when I might miss a meeting or when Zoom may fail me, I am also sending the below comments regarding Docket item #7 which pertains to a requested approval to subdivide 105 and 107 E Randolph to accommodate at swimming pool at 105 E Randolph.

I am the homeowner and resident at 109 E Randolph Avenue, where I have lived since 2004. My property is adjacent to 107 E Randolph (the former home of Barbara Dill) which was damaged by fire and is now vacant. I oppose the effort to modify the property boundaries for the following reasons:

1. If the backyard at 105 E Randolph cannot accommodate an inground pool of the size desired by the homeowner, then such a pool is probably not a good fit for that property. To solve the problem by purchasing the adjacent property at 107 E Randolph while it is vacant, and then petitioning for permission to take permanently a large slice of 107's back yard, will if approved, establish a bad precedent.
2. The reduction in width of the rear portion of the back yard at 107 E Randolph by 30% or more will result in a very narrow strip remaining to serve as the backyard for 107 E Randolph. It is unlikely that the average property owner would willingly agree to give up such a significant chunk of an already narrow back yard.
3. If approved, the new boundaries of these properties will destroy the existing symmetry, with one benefiting and one losing. This is also not a good precedent.
4. The water table is very high in Del Ray and with heavy rain, everyone on Randolph (and probably Stewart) have water issues in their yards, if not also in their basements. Adding an inground pool of the size anticipated will redirect a significant amount of water to the neighbors' properties. This is also a bad precedent. A hydrology report would be useful to evaluate the amount of water likely to be redirected.
5. The aerial view of 105 E Randolph reveals a considerable amount of impervious surface as contrasted with the neighboring lots. Converting more of the back yards of both 105 and 107 to impervious surface will further exacerbate the existing problems with run off.

Jeremy Flachs

Jeremy Flachs  
109 E Randolph Ave.  
Alexandria, Virginia 22301  
[Jeremy.flachs@flachslaw.com](mailto:Jeremy.flachs@flachslaw.com)

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This transmittal is both Confidential and Privileged. If received in error, even if possibly, then please notify us immediately. Do not disseminate, copy, or save anything (including attachments). Thank you.

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# [EXTERNAL]Planning Commission Meeting 4/7/2022 and Docket Item #7 re subdivision of 105 and 107 E Randolph Avenue to accommodate swimming pool

wcstreet@aol.com <wcstreet@aol.com>

Wed 4/6/2022 12:22 PM

To: Nancy Williams <Nancy.Williams@alexandriava.gov>; PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

Cc: vchangdc@yahoo.com <vchangdc@yahoo.com>

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Dear Planning Commission and Staff:

My name is Wanda Street. My husband and I own and reside at 103 East Randolph Avenue in Del Ray. We have lived at this location for 33 years and in the City for 43 years.

As I am unable to attend the meeting tomorrow or participate in the Zoom, I am writing to concur with the DRCA and Staff in their opposition to deny the request to re-subdivide 105 and 107 East Randolph Avenue to recreate two new odd shaped lots for the following reasons:

1. Water drainage on our block (and Del Ray in general as I am sure you are aware) is already an ongoing, troublesome issue. Adding more impervious structures to areas where standing water and poor drainage currently exist is not environmentally sound. It will only serve to exacerbate the existing drainage issues. We already experience water in our basement periodically; and after almost every rain, we have standing water at the back of our lot.
2. The plan to reconfigure the lot for 107 E. Randolph Avenue to accommodate a swimming pool would create two very odd shaped and sized lots, not in keeping with the historic character of this block, or Del Ray in general for that matter. Allowing this plan to go forward would set a bad precedent for the future. If the lot for 105 was not large enough or for a pool in the first place, reconfiguring the nextdoor lot to allow it is not a good idea. The back yard for the new structure at 107 would most certainly be significantly reduced. Not only that, presumably the pool would have some type of fence around it which would also serve to diminish the back yard of 107.

I hope you will consider the concerns of the long-time residents when you make your decision.

Thank you  
Wanda Street

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## Samantha Lockwood

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 6, 2022 9:50 PM  
**To:** Samantha Lockwood  
**Cc:** Karl Moritz; Nancy Williams  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Fwd: Randolph Subdivision  
**Attachments:** Penndorf Letter of Support\_105-107 East Randolph\_r1.pdf

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Duncan Blair <dblair@landcarroll.com>  
**Date:** April 4, 2022 at 4:14:34 PM EDT  
**Subject:** Randolph Subdivision

Good afternoon. The couple who is has been working with My Clients to buy the proposed lot at 107 East Randolph asked that I send you the attached to describe their interest and plans. Cleary, they feel it is suitable for residential use and structures notwithstanding the lot is not a rectangle. Duncan

[cid:image001.jpg@01D8483F.0153D380]

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03 April 2022

**City of Alexandria Planning Commission**

Attn: Commissioner Nathan Macek  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Commissioner Macek:

We kindly offer this letter in support of subdivision application #2022-00001 for 105 and 107 East Randolph Avenue for the upcoming Planning Commission Public Hearing on April 7, 2022.

Having spent the last 18 years as residents of the City of Alexandria and as active practicing design professionals in the community (Chris as a licensed Architect and small business owner and Jillian as an independent Residential Design Coordinator for a local Design/Build group), we offer our support not only as informed citizens and industry professionals but also as friends of the Hutchison family and as potential participants in the next stages of the property's responsible rehabilitation. In consideration of our position and in the interest of full transparency, it should be noted that if the proposed subdivision is approved by the Planning Commission, it is our intent to purchase the remaining property at 107 East Randolph from the Hutchisons to construct a new long-term home for our family.

Following the Hutchisons' purchase of the property at 107 East Randolph in 2021, we were invited to walk the house and offer our professional opinions of the observable damage to the structure following a fire earlier in the year. The fire, which we understand originated from a non-compliant residential sublease in an unfinished and technically non-habitable basement by Virginia Residential Code regulations, resulted in catastrophic damage to the building's structural wood framing, finishes, windows, appliances, fixtures, electrical wiring, plumbing, and mechanical systems/distribution. The visible destruction from the fire, smoke, and water combined with overwhelming lingering presence of smoke even several months after the fire event is a strong indicator of additional layers of concealed damage throughout the house. While we had all hoped that preservation and rehabilitation of the house would be feasible, following our review of the damage it is our collective professional recommendation that the house be demolished.

Given our respective design backgrounds, we have a deep appreciation for the urban fabric of the Del Ray community and recognize the importance of maintaining the character of the streetscape in long established sections of the neighborhood. Such a commitment can be observed in our 2017 renovation of an existing structure on Hume Avenue. If this project at 107 East Randolph moves forward, it is our express intent to design and construct a new residential structure that respects the historical context of the craftsman style bungalow street frontage and the scale of the neighboring homes on East Randolph Avenue - a commitment that cannot be guaranteed if the property ends up being sold to the highest bidder on the open market. The required demolition of the existing house at 107 East Randolph would also allow us to explore the viability of enhanced sustainability objectives through the potential use of on-site generated clean and silent renewable energy solutions, such as geothermal heating/cooling and solar power.

Because of our interests in the process, the Hutchisons have regularly communicated updates to us regarding the proceedings and interactions with other involved parties, including the Del Ray Citizens Association Land Use Committee and City of Alexandria Staff. Having reviewed the City Staff Report in response to the application, we offer a courteous dissent of opinion regarding the interpreted impact of the proposed subdivision. The City Staff offers a position stating that the proposed adjustment "does not meet the criteria of Section 1710(B) as the proposed new lots would not be of substantially the same character as other similarly situated lots in the original subdivision".

*Section 1710(B) states that the subdivided lots "shall be of substantially the same character as to suitability for residential use and structures, lot areas, orientation, street frontage, alignment to streets and restrictions as other land in the subdivision, particularly with respect to similarly situated lots within the adjoining portions of the original subdivision." Subdivision plat documents or land in the same general location and zone with similar features may be used to determine neighborhood character.*

It should be noted that none of the considerations associated with the referenced section apply in this instance. The property will maintain its residential use, the resultant lot area will still exceed the zone R-2-5 minimums, there will be no change in orientation of the lot, and there will be no impact to street frontage or alignment of the affected lots to the street.

Included in the City's Staff Report was a letter from the Del Ray Citizen's Association (DRCA) Land Use Committee (LUC) dated March 16, 2022, which states in its argument that "Although the lot lines have been adjusted over time, the lots have remained rectilinear and no L-shaped lots have been created. The proposed subdivision is not of the same character as the historic lot layouts and thus does not comply with the Zoning Code."

While the argument of regularity of lot geometry within the community is inherently undermined simply by the existence of multiple diagonal streets that traverse the grid creating non-rectilinear lots (in excess of 100 properties bounded by Commonwealth Avenue, Mount Ida Avenue, and Randolph Avenue, itself), a review of public record on the City of Alexandria's own online GIS Map tools yielded several examples of irregularly shaped lots throughout the current Del Ray community on regularly gridded sections of the neighborhood, specifically including multiple located within the limits of the historical Town of Potomac. Please see below for a list of several such examples throughout the 22301 zip code. A map illustrating the limits of the historical Town of Potomac and a map illustrating the locations of the examples within the historical area below are provided as attachments for ease of reference.

- 2703 Dewitt Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 305 Hume Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 302 East Howell Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 27 East Howell (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 1904 Clyde Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 406-1/2 East Clifford Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 329 East Clifford Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 207 Ashby Street (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 214 Randolph Avenue (Original Town of Potomac – see attached map)
- 32 East Bellefonte Avenue (Del Ray)
- 401 Monroe Avenue (Del Ray)
- 403 Monroe Avenue (Del Ray)
- 1510 Dewitt Avenue (Del Ray)
- 203 West Mason Avenue (Del Ray)
- 412 East Mason Avenue (Del Ray)
- 29 West Glendale Avenue (Del Ray)

Having been witness to the proceedings, presentations, and responses from City committees and staff throughout the Hutchisons' pursuit of approvals, we feel compelled to express our concern both as citizens of the community and as design professionals who serve it. We believe that the response of the DRCA Land Use Committee was not based on a comprehensive investigation or understanding of precedents associated with the issue being presented and the resultant influence of it with City Staff appears to be substantial. Restricting appropriate land development that falls within the intent of codes and ordinances without just cause is a disconcerting precedent and limits individuals' abilities to responsibly improve their real property and, by extension, our collective community.

We hope that the Planning Commission will take into consideration our offering of support and evidence of relevant examples of sites of a similar character throughout the neighborhood. Please do not hesitate to reach out for further discussion as you see fit.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Chris and Jillian Penndorf**

120 Hume Avenue

Alexandria, VA 22301

[cpenndorf@gmail.com](mailto:cpenndorf@gmail.com)

[jillianpenndorf@gmail.com](mailto:jillianpenndorf@gmail.com)

Encls.

CC: Chris Hutchison  
Elena Hutchison  
Duncan Blair



# The Town of Potomac

When the Washington, Alexandria & Mount Vernon Railway announced plans in 1892 that included tracks between Washington, D.C. and Alexandria, the flat, open land north of Alexandria became a logical site for a new community. The development firm of Wood-Harmon bought two large plots of land in 1894 --- a larger one called "Del Ray," from the estate of John Lloyd, and a smaller one called "St. Elmo" --- separated from each other by a racetrack. The Town of Potomac, Virginia, was chartered in March 1908, bounded on the east by the Washington & Alexandria Turnpike (now U.S. Route 1), on the north by Old Georgetown (now Glebe) Road and Braddock Avenue (now Ashby Street), on the west by the electric rail line (now Commonwealth Avenue), and on the south by Bellefonte Avenue.



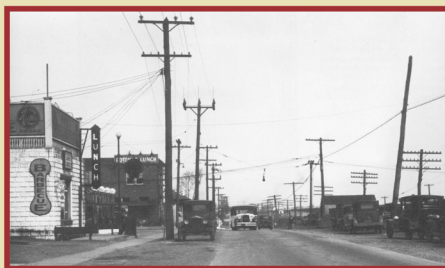
The Bank of Del Ray opened in July 1923, in temporary quarters in the Mt. Vernon Drugstore. The bank later constructed a new building, which still stands, at 2108 Mount Vernon Avenue, as does the house of its first president, John R. Harding, at 2100 Mount Vernon Ave. The bank withstood a dramatic robbery by a gang of six armed men in May 1929, but later fell victim to an attack from within, when it was found that cashier Clay Brittle had embezzled more than half the bank's assets. The bank closed its doors on January 21 1930, and thereafter paid out about 43 cents on the dollar to depositors pending sale of the land.

Special Collections, Alexandria Library



On the eve of annexation in 1929, many of the streets had been paved and lighted, and additional house construction had created a true town feel to Potomac. Street lighting had been installed in 1910 in the form of forty-five 40-candlepower incandescent lamps. The hard paving of streets began with Mount Vernon Avenue in 1911 and gradually expanded to other streets, although this process was still not complete in 1930. This view shows Hume Avenue from the top of a small ridge, looking east towards Potomac Yard.

Special Collections, Alexandria Library



A massive railroad classification yard (for switching and sorting trains) was built in 1904 to the east of Del Ray and St. Elmo, named Potomac Yard. This brought employment to the area, and spurred housing and retail growth. It also brought life to what had been the poorly maintained Washington & Alexandria Turnpike, along the eastern boundary of the Town of Potomac. Here that road is seen about 1930, improved as the Jefferson Davis Highway, with Potomac Yard on the right and the eastern edge of the town on the left.

The National Archives

Waverly Taylor  
1942

Emma P. Hume  
1925

Mount Vernon  
1921

Del Ray II  
1911

St. Elmo  
1894

Oakville  
1904  
(abandoned 1916)

Abington  
1922

Del Ray  
1894

The Town of Potomac was formed around two subdivisions, Del Ray and St. Elmo. Other subdivisions followed through the 1920's, but only one (Del Ray Section 2 by David N. Rust, Jr.) was sold with houses. All the rest were sold simply as lots and the owners built their own houses, often considerably later than the land purchase. The result is a wide range of architecture that reflects the dynamic evolution of styles between 1894 and 1930, including Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival, Arts and Crafts, Four-square and even row houses of various types. The presence of so many well-preserved styles within such a small area helped it receive designation as a state and national historic district.

City of Alexandria and Leland Ness



Alexandria County (which became renamed Arlington County the next year) established a Health Department in 1919 and constructed one of its clinics in Potomac in 1923 at 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue. The clinic was open one or two days a week, concentrating on pregnancy and infant care, functions later taken over by City agencies after town annexation. Seen here are most of the professional employees of the Arlington Health Department in December 1929: Director Peyton Chickester, MD, second from left; Sanitary Inspector Norbert Melnick, second from right; and Norma Davies, RN, a nurse shared with the school system, far right. Missing is infant nurse Minnie Rudasill, RN. On the far left is Henry Latane, MD, who gave tuberculosis tests as needed, and in the center is Sue Brown, RN, who organized the "Health Crusaders" in Mount Vernon School on a volunteer basis to teach the virtues of cleanliness and a healthy lifestyle to local children. The building was also used sometimes by the one-person County Welfare Department, which concentrated mostly on child abandonment and truancy cases, and by the county school system's full-time dentist.

Virginia Room, Arlington County Library

Del Ray and St. Elmo are early examples of commuter suburbs, since one of the first inter urban electric railways in the country provided a rapid means of travel for workers going between Washington and Alexandria. The Town of Potomac was also one of the first recipients of federal highway funds in 1915 when modernization of Mount Vernon Avenue met the needs of an emerging automobile culture. Ease of transit between Potomac and Alexandria was no doubt a factor in the decision of the City to annex the town. The first annexation effort in 1915 failed, but a second one launched in 1927 succeeded. At the stroke of midnight on New Year's Day, 1930, the Town of Potomac ceased to exist and became the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria.



1908 TOWN OF POTOMAC 1929

Produced for the Town of Potomac Centennial in 2008 by the City of Alexandria. Research and text by Lee Ness







1. 2703 Dewitt Avenue
2. 305 Hume Avenue
3. 302 East Howell Avenue
4. 27 East Howell
5. 1904 Clyde Avenue
6. 406-1/2 East Clifford Avenue
7. 329 East Clifford Avenue
8. 207 Ashby Street
9. 214 Randolph Avenue