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7-5-22

Statement of Joshua Bowman for City Council Meeting of July 5, 2022

Docket #8, 22-1355 Coordinated Development District Conceptual Design Plan #2022-00002  
Development Special Use Permit #2022-10012  
Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2022-00033  
221 West Glebe Road and 3606, 3608, 3610, 3612 and 3700 Mount Vernon  
Avenue - AHDC Glebe/Mt. Vernon

Good evening,

My name is Joshua Bowman and I have lived up the hill from Arlandria-Chirilagua for the better part of the past decade and I grew up with an Alexandria mailing address. Unlike tourists who come to walk in the footsteps of founding fathers or recent transplants drawn to the small-town vibe in the middle of the big city, this place has always been my home, and the importance of place is what I would like to speak about tonight.

Arlandria-Chirilagua is a very special and unique neighborhood. Crossing Four Mile Run is in some ways like crossing into another country, except the people that live there represent the very best of the American idea. They are hard working entrepreneurs that have brought the same pioneer spirit as so many generations before them to build something wonderful where before there was only an inhospitable floodplain. In so doing, they have created a community and a sense of place.

When the Small Area Plan was updated, so many people from this community spoke about displacement, rising rents, the loss of clientele, and changing demographics but you dismissed their concerns. Now the same sort of plan was resoundingly rejected by the residents of Del Ray and you go back to the drawing board. You speak about equity in housing, but why is it that you ignored the very people you claim you want to help?

Then, to add insult to injury, you claim that St. Rita's is standing in the way of progress, when we have been working all through the pandemic to help anyone and everyone who had any need. I have personally helped people get help paying their rent when they had COVID and have driven tons of food we've collected to the diocesan food bank. Fellow parishioners have collected children's clothing, coats, baby formula, school supplies, and more. We have been working tirelessly throughout the greatest human catastrophe of the last 50 years, and I will not stand for it when you impugn our motives.

We have been building up this community brick by brick for decades, and we know the affordability of housing is only one component of what makes a community vibrant. There also has to be organic growth and the ability for ordinary people to own their own homes. It's laughable to call this plan "art deco" and "inspired by its surroundings." It's a monstrosity that will blot out the sun, and it certainly doesn't encourage ownership. If you want to play the game of questioning motives, maybe it is yours that could bear closer scrutiny.

When you talk about increased density, let us have no illusion that anyone currently living in this community has the wherewithal to develop ten-story apartments. I certainly don't. The people who will benefit are the developers and the construction companies, not the residents of this neighborhood. I have lived here long enough to see what has happened to other similar neighborhoods in the region even in just the span of a decade. Mark my words: the reality is that Arlandria-Chirilagua as we know it today will soon be wiped off the map, and this development will be seen in retrospect as only the

beginning of that process.

I doubt anything I have said will persuade you to stop your relentless efforts to unmake everything that makes this neighborhood and this city so unique and wonderful, but I want to at least get it on the record so that others who may be watching tonight will know there is someone else who has heard them and who cares, because by your votes tonight, I know you will make it clear that you do not.

Thank you.



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**CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov**

**From:** Roy Shannon <rshannon@smw.law>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 05, 2022 8:21 PM  
**To:** CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Docket Item 8 [22-1355] - City Council Public Hearing July 5, 2022

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Madam Clerk,

On behalf of my client, Saint Rita Catholic Church and School, please include this statement in the record for Docket Item 8 on today's agenda for the City Council Public Hearing.

Saint Rita Catholic Church, located in Alexandria, has been part of the local community for over a century and is the spiritual home to nearly 1,000 families and 260 students in the parish school in grades pre-K through 8.

Saint Rita Catholic Church and the Catholic Diocese of Arlington are supportive of increasing affordable housing options and aspects of the mixed-use development planned by the developer Alexandria Housing Development Corporation (AHDC) on land adjacent to the Church's property.

AHDC notified the Diocese that it was submitting a revised project for its property for several reasons, including the acquisition of land along Mount Vernon Avenue that it did not own when it filed its the original application. The revised project in several ways is an improvement from the currently approved project. However, the Diocese still has significant concerns and is in the process of reviewing all of the revised project materials. The Diocese is seeking input from the parish community members most impacted by the project and plans to provide feedback to the developer. The safety, health, and well-being of its parishioners, especially the young children who attend the Church and School as well as the continued operation of the Church and its mission remain the ultimate objective for the parish in this process.

Representatives of the Diocese look forward to continuing to work with the City and the developer to determine if additional coordination on the CDD portion of the Church's property is useful and, most importantly, to ensure that the safety, health, operational, and well-being concerns of the Saint Rita Catholic Church and School community are meaningfully and adequately addressed.

Thank you.

Very Respectfully,  
Roy

**Roy Shannon, Jr.**



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