

Jackie Henderson

14
6-13-15

From: boydwalker2012@gmail.com
Sent: Saturday, June 13, 2015 11:19 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #74922: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council June 13th, docket item 14 Request for in

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 74922.

Request Details:

- Name: Boyd Walker
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-732-7269
- Email: boydwalker2012@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: June 13th, docket item 14 Request for increase of Floor Area Ratio at 815 1/2 King also known as the Ild Town theater.

I would like to point out several things in your consideration of whether to allow the 100 year old Ild Tiwn Theater be converted to retail. In my previous objections to converting the theater to retail I have pointed to the study on the City's own website, Arts and Prosperity II, to point out that the arts has a net positive return on investment, at more than 2 for 1, and so to lose a theater venue to another retail location is to cut off the potential of the Arts and Prosperity mandate: Arts provide a focus for Tourists, visitors and residents.

It would be unlikely if this is changed that this "unfortunate" trend, as the staff report says, would be reversed. Main Street theaters are difficult to make viable and Main St. Have been losing theaters. I hope you will urge the applicant to work with staff and the arts community to save this theater, the last single use historic theater in Alexandria. At one time there were several, two in Oarker Gray, one at the North End of Old Town, and one in the 1700 block of King St. All of these have been lost.

I convened a meeting with Karl Moritz, Mathew Stensrud, Dianne Ruggiero, Patti North and AEDP to discuss what could be done. Karl Moritz assured the group that he would encourage continued use as a theater. We thought at the time the theater would be sold to Jeff Yates and would continue as a theater, so what has happened since? Why has no additional effort been made if Yates is not purchasing the theater? I would urge before this decision is made a meeting of Arts individuals similar to the one I convened before be considered.

The financial viability of a property owner should not be the chief concern of the council, but the viability of Old Town and all of Alexandria. This is not an ideal situation and I believe if a true effort is made Alexandria can do better. The Hermione visit this week proves that visitors appreciate history, reenactment, and things that are unique to Alexandria.

- Expected Response Date: Monday, June 22

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

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Jackie Henderson

14
6-13-15

From: c_flan@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2015 9:56 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #74815: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 74815.

Request Details:

- Name: Colleen Flanagan
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 4109177273
- Email: c_flan@verizon.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

While the owner is certainly entitled to a return on his investment, he is not entitled, in my opinion, to dismantle the theater in a manner that threatens its historic character and future use as a theater. The Old Town Theater is one-of-a-kind; a beloved landmark that could contribute substantially to the surrounding businesses, drawing patrons here from throughout the metro area and beyond in a way that yet another retail business will not.

In a previous application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,

Colleen Flanagan
Alexandria Film Festival

- Expected Response Date: Thursday, June 18

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