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9-17-16

William Goff

Ladies and Gentleman—let there be no misunderstanding –our neighborhoods are under attack- our right to tranquility and a peaceful existence are in doubt

Our attack began years ago with the Bracc, the structure that should never been built a structure that is choking our roads with traffic upsetting neighbors and neighborhoods. The waterfront is being assaulted with the demolition of North Robinson Terminal-the foundations of homes are shaking as the demolition process continues, wreaking havoc with people's lives.

The attacks continue with the 1.5 billion dollar project to rebuild our school system, a school system that was never maintained and left to rot-, while allocated money was placed elsewhere. The Patrick Henry project has been flawed-the residents will have to endure less green space and more bus and semi-truck traffic on neighborhood streets in order to save 1.2 million dollars. Are you aware that the final project will be 11,000 sq. feet larger -7% larger than originally planned? Keep the project on scale- and we save 3 million dollars and can eliminate traffic on Latham St. There was never a side by side cost analysis with C.1 and A.1 to validate any savings The city advisory committee listened to the citizens, but only listened – the whole process was merely a side show-to check the box and move on.

Most recently Karen Graf school board chair -at the very last school board meeting of the year, decided it was time to dissolve the existing citizen's advisory at T.C. Williams which had been meeting since 2004

and start a new committee of 25 citizens handpicked by Dr. Crawley to serve a 2 year term. These newly appointed citizens-non neighbors of the stadium neighborhood would then dictate policy in this stadium area. For Ms. Graf it was an opportunity to court these citizens in favor of a new stadium and serve to abet her promise to deliver a lighted stadium. I would consider Ms. Graf's actions are at best manipulative bordering on deceitful. This citizen advisory was formed in 2004 -when the city and the school board came to the neighborhood and asked that the field remain in the back of the school. This citizen advisory was established to protect the interest of the neighborhoods surrounding the high school. Ms. Graf, unilaterally without any school board discussion or citizen discussion was ready to dissolve this neighborhood committee

One final attack—the removal of students from taking the SOL test in order to pad the final results is appalling 36 underachievers were contacted by the principal of Cora Kelly Brandon Davis -and were urged not to take the SOL test. Removing them from the student pool it would raise the scores of the school. This principal should be fired immediately as it was all about him being principal of the year and his ego and not doing what was right for the school. An immediate audit of all schools should be made to make sure this was a one school action. Despite the above tactic the rating of 8 of our 13 schools fell last year with several schools in danger of academic warning

Is this your model for academics in the city of Alexandria? You are under attack

## **A statement by Bert Ely to City Council pertaining to waterfront development projects**

September 17, 2016

Madam Mayor and members of Council I am Bert Ely and I live at 200 South Pitt Street. Although I am active in several civic associations and a member of the Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Waterfront Construction and the Motorcoach Task Force, I am speaking today only for myself with regard to waterfront development projects.

The troublesome demolition of Robinson Terminal South, or RTS, raises concerns that will likely continue during the construction phase of the RTS project while highlighting issues that will arise when the demolition of Robinson Terminal North, or RTN, begins.

First, EYA, RTS's developer, has done a poor job of communication to the public, and even at times to City staff it seems, what and when it will be doing, despite the weekly construction updates it has published. This was especially evident in the breaking up and then the crushing of the concrete slabs under the RTS buildings. Those activities were of particular concern to nearby homeowners because of the damaging vibrations and unhealthy dust they generated. At times, City staff seemed unaware of what EYA was up to.

Second, based on the numerous reports I received, insufficient action was taken by EYA to minimize vibration impacts on nearby historic structures. It may be months, if not years, before all the damaging impacts become evident. The structures adjacent to RTN are generally much newer, yet vibrations and demolition activity there will have damaging impacts on those structures, too, as occurred during EYA's conversion of the Sheetmetal Workers building into condominiums. Quite frankly, the City must become much more aggressive and proactive in enforcing vibration limitations that minimize damage to nearby buildings.

Third, property owners near RTS have begun to file damage claims with EYA, but only now is EYA in the process of formalizing a protocol for processing those claims. Damage claims may also emerge if EYA does any pile-driving at RTS. City staff needs to oversee the claims-handling process to ensure that it functions in a timely and fair manner. A comparable process needs to be put in place for the RTN project before the demolition there commences.

Fourth, although City staff has taken steps to address the twin challenges of enforcing parking restrictions on construction workers and haul-route designations on trucks going to and from RTS, violations continue, which cry out for more stringent enforcement. These challenges will increase as construction gets underway at RTS. They likewise will arise when activity finally begins at RTN.

Robinson Terminal North, of course, is a different story, as development plans are now on hold due to the owners' inability to find a hotel operator to participate in the project. Almost certainly, a revised development plan for RTN will come before Council. That resubmission will give Council an opportunity to overcome serious shortcomings in the current DSUP for RTS, including its failure to require that contaminated soil be barged away from the site rather than trucked over city streets and an instance on an architectural style more fitting for Old Town than what the current DSUP would permit.

Thank you for your time today – I welcome your questions.

submitted by Jack Sullivan  
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9-17-16

STATEMENT TO COUNCIL ON PATRICK HENRY  
EXPANSION 9/17/16

Thank you Madame Mayor and Council.

Welcome back from what I hope was a restful vacation for you all.  
There is lots to be done. My concern today is what occurred just  
before the Summer began.

The School Board, on a split vote, approved a design for the  
expanded Patrick Henry School that was other than one the Advisory  
Group by an overwhelming margin had approved.

That Group, one including neighbors, ACPS staff and other community  
interests, had reach an agreement that was thrown out by the School  
Board Chair, Ms. Graf, in a heartbeat.

I know these neighbors. My first house in Alexandria abutted the  
Patrick Henry campus. They are not “nimbys” and had worked hard to  
find solutions.

The Advisory Group operated as such groups are supposed to —  
transparently and in good faith. They came to a concensus, a win-win  
result — and many of us exalted — THE SYSTEM WORKED!

Then in an instant, all that effort was tossed aside. The explanation of Ms. Graf was that the Advisory Group agreed design was more expensive than hers. According to the press, School Superintendant Crowley contradicted her almost immediately saying that that her design might turn out to be more expensive. What is going on here?

Even though you have limited jurisdiction over the schools, I contend that it falls to you as our elected representatives to do what you can to help heal this clear "breach of trust" with the community.

Several of you in the past have been critical of the way the Patrick Henry expansion has proceeded. You have been right. But nothing rises to the level of bad faith represented here.

I suggest that you weigh in individually or as a group to right this wrong and seek a return to the Advisory Group plan. Otherwise you soon will be faced with voting on a virtual "done deal" — and the responsibility for the outcome will be on your shoulders.

Thank you for your attention. I believe others today will be speaking to the same issue.

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9-17-16

City Council of Alexandria, Virginia  
Public Hearing Meeting  
Saturday, September 15, 2016

Open Mike  
Concerns about the Process for the Expansion of Patrick Henry School and its Recreation Facility

by  
Nancy R. Jennings

Good Morning

My name is Nancy Jennings and I live at 2115 Marlboro Drive. I am President of the Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA), and speak today on its behalf about City plans to expand the Patrick Henry School and Recreation Center.

Last January, the SHA Board of Directors sent you a letter with recommendations for the expansion, and I spoke to you about these recommendations in February. The three main ones were the preservation of green space, a structural integrity to the new building, and a design for vehicle traffic that kept it on Taney Avenue rather than sending it onto Latham Street and throughout the neighborhood.

An Advisory Group was created that worked very hard, especially SHA's representative Mary Biegel, who could not be here today because her brother is getting married. The Advisory Group first met in January and included PTA representatives, two Planning Commissioners, civic association representatives, and members at large. Council Member Del Pepper also attended.

This Group spent months diligently researching, evaluating, and working through the options in a professional, collaborative manner. Of the options given the Group for the new school and rec center, the Advisory Group reached consensus in recommending Option C1 as the preferred alternative, because it kept most vehicle traffic on Taney Avenue—a main thruway—and off of the smaller neighborhood roads.

Nevertheless, despite the hard work and detailed review by the Advisory Group, the ACPS and School Board chose to pursue Option A1, which puts the rec center next to single-family homes on Latham—making it as far away as possible from the school parking lots and the garden apartments on Taney—and it puts school bus and truck traffic onto Latham. The traffic associated with A1 will not only lower the quality of life on the neighborhood streets but it will also lower property values for tax and resale purposes—the 6 homes most impacted are worth on average a half-million dollars each—for a total of more than \$3 M. The A1 design will also create significant pedestrian safety issues.

This was an ABRUPT decision that overlooked the work of the Advisory Group, which had concluded Option A1 has serious defects. The process by which the School Board adopted this defective design happened very rapidly and without adequate public notice. Documents were posted by staff for review at 10 am on Thursday, May 19, and a vote was taken that same evening—less than 12 hours later—by the School Board. This decision has created a public integrity issue!

Last Thursday, the School Board reviewed the schematic design of Option A1 for Patrick Henry and noted the building is now 11,000 sq. ft. bigger than planned (even less green space), that the easement on the site by Dominion Virginia Power was never factored in, and that no maximum price has been guaranteed. The Preliminary Site Plan is due next Tuesday, Sept 20, and then the School Board will engage in a budget discussion to determine if additional funds are needed for the project and how these funds will be provided.

Given that the costs of four major school projects in the past decade have ranged from 25% to 200% over the original estimated costs, this school—which is now estimated to cost \$42.1 M—will realistically cost between \$52 and \$63 M.

- The new T. C. Williams High School (2004) was first estimated to cost \$70 M. It was budgeted for \$80.5 M and later the cost was revised to \$99.5 M. (42% increase)
- The new soccer field at Hammond Middle School (2012) was budgeted for \$1 M but cost over \$2.3 M. (230% increase)
- Jefferson Houston School (2012) was first estimated to cost \$36 M and was budgeted for \$44.2 M and then \$46.5 M when the pre-K classrooms were added. (30% increase)
- The T. C. Williams tennis courts (2013) were budgeted for around \$475,000 and went up to \$675,000 when lights were added. The final cost was over \$1.2 M. (48% increase)

Please be advised that SHA Board Members are not happy that the work and recommendations of the Advisory Group and citizens were discarded by the ACPS and the School Board. We promise to closely review the design for the expansion of Patrick Henry School and Rec Center including compliance with ALL zoning regulations, especially related to height and setbacks.

Thank you.



9-17-16

\*submitted by  
Tim Morgan

TIMOTHY G. MORGAN, PRESIDENT WATERFORD PLACE HOA  
REMARKS TO CITY COUNCIL, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016

Hi, I am Tim Morgan, President of the Waterford Place HOA. Our neighborhood is directly across South Union Street from the Robinson Terminal South project under development by EYA.

This will be a bit of an "I told you so". But it is not too late to avoid a serious situation.

As you know, the RTS site has had a long history as an industrial site and is proven to have harmful compounds in the ground. These compounds can be released into the air with the demolition, excavation and other development activities.

We neighbors have for months asked the City to monitor air quality around the RTS site, but the City has failed to implement adequate measures to detect any harmful compounds that are released.

Time and again, the issue has been raised. Staff's response has been that "industry standard measures" are being employed to minimize dust. This has turned out to be just spraying water over site activities. And the Staff's answer to our request for air quality monitoring has been "visual observation".

**This is not enough.** I have personally observed situations where water was not controlling the dust, and called the EYA site manager to complain.

So let's face this fact: Those of us that live in the vicinity of the RTS project are being exposed daily to atmospheric pollution from demolition activities that can produce unacceptable levels of AIRBORNE EMISSIONS, many of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects. That includes my neighborhood of 35 households, including babies, small children and elderly residents.

There are established air-monitoring protocols to warn people when volatile compounds are present at an unacceptable level, so that precautions can be taken to protect vulnerable citizens.

EYA's Development Special Use Permit requires that they (and I quote) "(s)ubmit a Health and Safety Plan indicating measures to be taken during remediation and/or construction activities to **minimize the potential risks to workers, the neighborhood, and the environment**. Initial Air Monitoring may be required during site activities to demonstrate acceptable levels of volatiles and/or airborne particles. **The determination whether air monitoring is needed must be adequately addressed in the Health and Safety Plan submitted for review.**"

EYA's Health and Safety Plan is very generic. It concentrates only on worker safety on the job site with absolutely no provisions for monitoring health and safety impacts to the community or our neighborhoods. The DSUP specifically requires that the plan minimize the potential risks to workers, **the neighborhood, and the environment**.

The issues surrounding EYA's air monitoring protocol are serious. EYA has been allowed to conduct demolition operations WITHOUT monitoring the air quality off-site in the surrounding neighborhoods. They have installed some air monitors on site but have admitted to "moving them around." It is NOT acceptable to change the location of site perimeter monitors that record pollution leaving the site.

What am I asking you to do? Please immediately direct the City manager and staff to:

1. Implement an off-site network of Continuous Emission Monitors that can measure hazardous air emissions in the neighborhood.
2. Require EYA to submit a revised Health and Safety Plan for the project.
3. Bring on a consultant or other advisors – maybe from the State or EPA – to review the plan and the measures being implemented against standards and best practices.
4. Issue a stop work order to EYA to cease development activities until these new measures are in place.

Let me close by saying this: The number one responsibility of government is to protect the health, safety and well being of its citizens. I have been surprised – even frightened – by the lack of care exhibited by this City around these waterfront developments. This is not just a matter of poor management. This is a failure of leadership. If you fail to take action, you will be responsible for the outcomes.