



May 6, 2019

Dana W. Wedeles
Principal Planner
City of Alexandria
Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Division of Park Planning, Design + Capital Projects
1108 Jefferson Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Dana,

Please let this letter serve as Rebuilding Together DC Alexandria's support for naming the park at 3550 Commonwealth Avenue, 'Unity Park.'

Since being awarded the Project Reinvest \$500,000 grant in 2017, it has been an honor to work with you and the staff at DCRPCA converting the open space at 3550 Commonwealth into a park where residents actually want to visit! It's great to drive by and see the park 'in action' by so many neighbors!

You and DCRPCA should be very proud of the work you've done here!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katharine Dixon".

Katharine Dixon
President and CEO



Lynhaven Citizens Association
Matthew Gillette, President
166 Wesmond Dr
Alexandria, VA 22305

May 7, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Lynhaven Citizens Association (LCA), I would like to voice our support for naming the neighborhood park located at 3550 Commonwealth Ave, Unity Park. I make this request after a unanimous vote of support was take at a recent general membership meeting.

As you may know, in 1970, 19-year-old Robin Gibson was murdered at the 711 that was located next to the current site of the park. This ignited the racial tensions that had been brewing throughout desegregation.

John L. Hanna, assistant manager of the store, said he observed Gibson putting razor bags into a bag.

"Gibson then allegedly pulled a knife on Hanna. Hanna told police he then pulled a revolver from his right hip pocket and fired once. Gibson staggered toward the door and collapsed."

Immediately after the shooting at 6:35 p.m., a crowd began to gather outside the store. By 9 p.m., approximately 500 to 600 people had gathered outside the store. Violence broke out as persons in the large crowd began hurling rocks.

The crowd spread to other nearby stores, where more rocks were thrown through windows and a fire was ignited. As the night went on, the violence spread throughout Del Rey, more cars destroyed and cars overturned.

Over the next three nights, violence continued across the city: 14 arrests and seven cases of arson.

Hanna was charged with murder that night, but was released on \$10,000 bond shortly afterwards. In mid-June, Hanna admitted he had planted his own knife near the body. After one trial ended in a hung jury, he pled guilty to manslaughter and served less than a year in prison before he was paroled.

Given this history we believe that Unity Park is a fitting name because speaks to hopes and dreams that we have for this park. That it would be a place on connection, recreation, and fun for all of the people that live in the neighborhoods surrounding it. It would also serve as a reminder of where we have come from and where we are going.

In addition, this name also speaks to the fact that it sits between several neighborhoods (Including Lynhaven, Hume Springs, and Del Ray) and recognizes all the work the residents of the various surrounding neighborhoods put in to the original park construction.

In conclusion, please consider approving the name of "Unity Park" for the neighborhood park at 3550 Commonwealth Avenues. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gillette
President, Lynhaven Citizens Association
Lynhaven.Civic@gmail.com