

**RESOLUTION OF ARLINGTON COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION REGARDING USE
OF 1101 LEE HIGHWAY PROPERTY IN ROSSLYN**

WHEREAS, in 2014 Arlington County paid \$2.4 million to purchase a privately-owned property in Rosslyn located at 1101 Lee Highway (now identified as 2101 North Lynn Street);

WHEREAS, the April 23, 2014 County Manager's report in support of the acquisition stated that the property could be used as an ancillary boathouse facility or "in addition, or as alternative uses, the County may locate other passive and/or active recreational uses on the property"; (arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=2769&meta_id=121077)

WHEREAS, the County's May 13, 2014, news release announcing the County Board's approval of the property's acquisition stated that the County was considering using the property as:

- (1) an ancillary boathouse facility containing educational and recreation facilities that would complement a potential lower boathouse site on the Potomac River shoreline;
- (2) a possible realignment of a bicycle trail to improve safety and access; and
- (3) open space for passive recreation use; (newsroom.arlingtonva.us/release/county-board-approves-acquisition-of-lee-highway-property-along-potomac-river/)

WHEREAS: the County's 2014 news release stated: "Any planning efforts will include a comprehensive public process." The news release stated further that the "public process" was to be in addition to a complementary process undertaken by the National Park Service;

WHEREAS, the Public Spaces Master Plan that the Arlington County Board adopted on April 25, 2019, identifies the property as a new County park (arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3630&meta_id=185729). The Master Plan identified the park as among those of high importance to the County's park system within the next decade and on which the County should focus its master planning efforts;

WHEREAS, the park contains an upland woodland that is located east of North Lynn Street between the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the north and I-66 to the south;

WHEREAS, the park's natural area is presently visible and accessible to the many users of the nearby Custis Trail;

WHEREAS, the July 2015 Rosslyn Sector Plan states that the County should increase the approximately 5% total tree canopy coverage within the Rosslyn Coordinated Redevelopment District to 15% or more to enable the coverage to meet or exceed the County's goal for central business districts as outlined in the County's Urban Forest Master Plan; (arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2015/12/151208_RosslynSectorPlan-HI.pdf)

WHEREAS, at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 5, 1995, the Arlington County Civic Federation passed a resolution recommending that a boathouse not be built at the shoreline site below Rosslyn and across from Theodore Roosevelt Island (the Lower Rosslyn Site) because of its adverse environmental impacts on the shoreline and nearby natural areas;

www.civfed.org/boathouse.htm)

WHEREAS, the Civic Federation reaffirmed its opposition to the construction of a boathouse at the Lower Rosslyn Site in a March 12, 1998, letter to the Chairman and other members of the Arlington County Board and in a July 22, 2004, letter to the Superintendent of the National Park Service's George Washington Memorial Parkway; (www.civfed.org/boathouse.htm)

WHEREAS, in June 2018, the National Park Service (NPS) issued a draft environmental assessment (EA) for an "Arlington County and Vicinity Non-Motorized Boathouse Facility"; (parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=186&projectID=13418&documentID=89109).

WHEREAS, the draft EA states: "The NPS, in cooperation with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and Arlington County, is evaluating the proposed development of a boathouse and related facilities on the Virginia side of the Potomac River";

WHEREAS, the "preferred alternative" in the draft EA identifies the use of the park (the Upper Rosslyn Site) as a support facility for a boathouse to be constructed on the Potomac River at the Lower Rosslyn Site.

WHEREAS, the draft EA describes the planned uses for the park as follows: "A support facility containing office space, locker rooms, restrooms, and space for education and outreach would be developed on site in Rosslyn out of the floodplain, between Lynn Street, the I-66 off ramp, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway.";

WHEREAS, the draft EA describes another alternative that would construct the boathouse on the Lower Rosslyn Site without using the Upper Rosslyn Site. Under that alternative, the boathouse would have the same footprint and facilities as would the boathouse constructed under the "preferred alternative";

WHEREAS, the draft EA also cautions that "construction of the facilities on the Upper Rosslyn Site would necessitate removal of some trees that are within the boundary of the George Washington Memorial Parkway Historic District which would alter the cultural landscape and diminish the integrity of the setting and feeling of the immediate area.";

WHEREAS, there is no need to impair the County's natural resources and significantly reduce the tree canopy in the park when a functional boathouse can be constructed at the Lower Rosslyn site without impacting the park;

WHEREAS, the County government has cooperated with the NPS in the development of a "preferred alternative" that would use the park for a boathouse support facility without first conducting the comprehensive public process to which the County had committed in its County's May 13, 2014, news release or the master park planning process recommended in the Public Spaces Master Plan;

WHEREAS, as part of the Civic Federation's review of the draft resolution it made inquiries of County staff to ascertain the County's intent regarding planning for the 1101 Lee Highway Site

and, despite those inquiries, received no definitive answers;

WHEREAS, despite those inquiries and without notice to the Civic Federation or to the appropriate County Commissions, the County Board included as a consent item to its May 18, 2019, meeting a proposal to enter into a Programmatic Agreement with the National Park Service and other agencies in furtherance of the Boathouse Project, including the 1101 Lee Highway property; and,

WHEREAS, the County Board subsequently, by a vote of 5-0, authorized the County to enter into the Programmatic Agreement, despite the objections of the President of the Civic Federation and the Environment and Energy Conservation Commission, among others;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that, through its actions with respect to the 1101 Lee Highway property, the Arlington County Civic Federation considers that the Arlington County government is not acting in accordance with:

- (1) prior County government statements that assured a comprehensive public planning process for this property;
- (2) the County's April 25, 2019, Public Spaces Master Plan, which promised openness and full public participation in all park planning decisions as well as the prioritization of this property for the development of a park master plan; and,
- (3) the County's long-standing practice of submitting projects with such significant potential environmental effects to the relevant appointed County commissions;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Arlington County Civic Federation urges the Arlington County Board and/or County Manager to immediately initiate the comprehensive public planning process as provided in the County's 2014 news release regarding the County Board's approval of the County's acquisition of the 1101 Lee Highway property, and the County's Public Spaces Master Plan; and,

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, to help assure that the County government completes its public planning process for the property in a timely manner, the Arlington County Civic Federation recommends that the Arlington County Board and/or County Manager ask the National Park Service to defer any further consideration of the use of the Upper Rosslyn Site for a boathouse support facility until such time as the County government has completed its public planning process for the property.