



July 19, 2016

Fairfax County Planning Commission
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330
Fairfax, VA 22035

Re: Rezoning Application No. RZ 2015-DR-009
Hills Nursery, Gulick Group Rezoning and Cluster Development Proposal

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of the Executive Board of the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) regarding the pending rezoning and cluster development proposal for a portion of the former Hills Nursery site, an 11-acre parcel in Great Falls. We are requesting a delay in a vote due to several unresolved issues.

At a GFCA public townhall meeting this week on this application (and other land use cases), several nearby residents said they are in touch with an arborist and state officials about issues relating to the application. They told us that they have requested the Planning Commission defer consideration this week until the residents can complete their evaluation and recommendations can be prepared for consideration by the Planning Commission. GFCA believes these requests have merit and we endorse their request for a delay so that all commissioners will have a fuller picture of the issues at stake.

GFCA wrote each commissioner last month to identify our concerns and GFCA's immediate past president, Eric Knudsen, testified before the Planning Commission on June 29 to discuss our community's concerns and current opposition. GFCA continues to have concerns about the following components of the proposal:

- **Adequacy of Storm Water Management:** This property's proximity to the Piney Run stream valley means that an effective and comprehensive storm water management plan is imperative. To date, the applicant has not provided satisfactory site run-off calculations and data sufficient to show that storm water management on the site will not adversely affect adjacent and downstream properties, or that a cluster development will better address environmental and runoff concerns than a conventional development.
- **Adequacy of Tree Preservation:** The site in question is heavily wooded, but only trees on the periphery of the property are designated for preservation. The proposed development plan shows that the critical root zones of a number of trees (including several trees shared with adjacent neighbors) are located within either the proposed

limits of clearing or the proposed septic drain fields. At least a dozen of these potentially endangered trees are large specimen oaks. We are concerned that this design calls into question the future viability of both the trees and the septic systems, as well as the overall validity of the applicant's tree preservation plan.

- **Number of Proposed Lots in a Conventional Development Compared to Cluster Density:** Regulations pertaining to conventional development do not demand the highest level of environmental protection, including storm water management, septic systems and tree preservation. Therefore, lots and density should not be established without these environmental standards as a starting point for the number of lots in the development.
- **Disruption/Safety During Construction:** A recurring theme of the public meetings held regarding this application were neighborhood concerns about the disruption caused by construction on the site, including increased noise and traffic, pedestrian and child safety, parking, and related issues. The applicant has not developed a comprehensive construction management plan to the satisfaction of the community.

Our community continues to believe that the approval of a rezoning and cluster proposal in Great Falls should not be taken lightly and warrants careful scrutiny. Until these concerns, and any additional concerns that may come to light as the community has additional time to evaluate the application, are resolved, we urge you to postpone the vote on the pending application.

Sincerely,



William Canis
President

cc. John Foust, Supervisor, Dranesville District
Gregory A. Riegle, McGuire Woods
Lori R. Greenlief, McGuire Woods