



NRCA, P.O. Box 3242, Alexandria, VA 22302

January 28, 2022

Planning Commission
c/o Department of Planning & Zoning
P.O. Box 178
Alexandria, VA 22314
PlanComm@alexandriava.gov

Re: Special Use Permit #2021-00118, 3316 Circle Hill Road

Dear Chairman Macek and Planning Commission Members:

North Ridge Citizens' Association ("NRCA") welcomes the prospect of the replacement of the unoccupied residential structure at 3316 Circle Hill Road. The proposed new structure specified in the SUP application appears to be compatible with the neighborhood, and we rely on the Commission and City staff to assure that it will comply with zoning requirements.

We wish to make the Planning Commission aware of several neighborhood concerns about the redevelopment of this property. These concerns are the tree canopy, stormwater runoff, and the potential for airborne pollutants from the demolition of the existing house.

The tree canopy is essential to the North Ridge community's appearance, livability, and environmental health. The canopy is not only a matter of isolated trees in individual landscaped yards, but part of a larger ecosystem that includes Monticello Park. The mature trees that are the hallmark of the North Ridge ecosystem have suffered significantly from redevelopment and climate change as well as competition from non-native invasive species. To mitigate these negative impacts on the tree canopy of the proposed construction project, we request that the developer be required to:

- a) Preserve mature canopy trees and other native trees to the maximum extent possible.
- b) Plant at least 5 deciduous native canopy trees in the steep area at the rear of the property labeled "upland forest" in the tree survey. The new trees should be canopy-size tree species native to the area and should be between 10 to 15 feet in height at planting.
- c) Provide adequate water (weekly, absent rainfall) to the newly planted trees until the property is sold and occupied.
- d) Replace the Southern Magnolia in front of the house, if it is removed, with two native deciduous or evergreen canopy trees in the front yard.
- e) Remove dead trees on the property.

- f) Remove bamboo, ivy, and any other invasive plants listed in "Non-Native Invasive Plants of the City of Alexandria" (March, 2019) that have a significant presence on the property.
- g) Consult with the owners of bordering properties in developing the landscape plan, since evergreens that serve as screens along the property boundaries will be removed.

While two other areas of concern may not be not part of the formal SUP review process, we want to highlight them here:

First, stormwater runoff is a major concern in North Ridge, and the subject property slopes steeply downhill to the north and east. In addition to the removal of trees, all new construction causes extreme soil disturbance which greatly decreases soil permeability and increases water runoff. We ask Commissioners and City staff to be especially cognizant that neighboring properties are greatly at risk from runoff from this property. Adding native canopy trees above and beyond landscape guidelines would mitigate flooding downslope. Also, given that 3116 Circle Hill is downslope from neighbors on the north side, it might be to the interest of the developers to add canopy trees to neighbors' properties if the neighbors agree.

Second, the demolition of the existing house—built in 1938 according to real estate assessment records—has the potential of releasing lead paint or dust into the ambient air, a particular health hazard for children. We request that City staff confirm that the contractor(s) for this project will follow all applicable regulations regarding testing for lead paint and preventing the contamination of the air and soil.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and the responsiveness of the developer and City staff.

Sincerely,



John Fehrenbach, President

cc: Jon Lambert, Director, T&ES
John Marlin, City Arborist