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ROBERT E. BROSNAN
CHIEF, PLANNING DIVISION

November 2, 1999

Dear Community Leader,

In 1993 the County adopted the Siting Principles and Siting Process for locating County Government facilities and programs. The Process was intended for the use of Arlington County when seeking a site for a new facility or when significantly changing an existing site. A copy of the Siting Process document is enclosed.

The original document provided for a review of the Siting Process. The County Board appointed a committee on September 18, 1999 to conduct this review. A copy of the Charge given to the Siting Process Review Committee is enclosed as well as a page representing the Committee's ideas for changes to the Siting Process and its Principles. You are invited to meet with the Committee at a public meeting to give us your ideas and concerns.

This meeting will take place on **Thursday, November 18, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. in County Board Room 307, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard**. If you are unable to attend, the Committee would like your input by letter or email. Please address your comments or questions to Terry Russell at the Arlington County Planning Division, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 608, Arlington, Virginia 22201, or trusse@co.arlington.va.us, or call him at 703-228-3528.

Sincerely,

Paxton Baker, Chairman
Siting Process Review Committee

SITING PROCESS REVIEW COMMITTEE

CHARGE

CREATION: The Siting Process Review Committee (SPRC) is created as an advisory body by the County Board of Arlington County, Virginia

MISSION: The Siting Process Review Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the County Board with respect to modifications to the Siting Process Procedures

FUNCTIONS AND SCOPE: The Siting Process Review Committee shall carry out the following:

1. Review the Siting Process Procedures and their history.
2. Consider how well the procedures work in a variety of situations
 - a. Consider a Fast Track Option to be used when a situation arises that requires relatively speedy action due to an unforeseen opportunity or a commitment to others.
 - b. Consider whether there should be modifications to the Process to be used in cases where land or space becomes available in a specific location.
 - c. Consider whether there should be modifications to the Process for facilities that have already been identified in approved plans.
 - d. Consider whether there should be modifications to the Process to be used when there is a need to add space or expand programs at an existing facility.
3. Develop recommendations for the County Board on how to improve the Siting Process Procedures.
4. Conduct a community forum to gather public comment on the Siting Process Procedures and any proposed modifications under consideration by the Committee.
5. Present findings to the County Board in a Work Session to be scheduled in December 1999, which shall conclude this Committee's work.

MEMBERSHIP: The Committee shall be comprised of representatives of the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, the Civic Federation and the Community Services Board, as well as

citizens representing neighborhoods that have participated in the Siting Process, and others, as determined to be appropriate by the County Board. A member of the Planning Division of DCPHD will provide staff support.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Members are expected to fully participate in the Committee and to offer their experience and expertise about the issues from both an individual and community perspective. The Committee will self-monitor its activities and progress in fulfilling its mission. The Chair will be responsible for keeping the County Board apprised of progress.

MEETINGS and SCHEDULE: In order to complete its work by December 1999, the Committee shall meet bi-weekly, commencing in October. The Community Forum will be held several weeks after the Committee begins its work.

COMMITTEE IDEAS FOR CHANGES TO THE SITING PROCESS

1. The Siting Process was written for difficult cases, and is thorough in its approach to developing community consensus. It needs some revision to account for situations that require a short timeline, and of situations where there is general community agreement on a site before its is acquired. That should not require eliminating any of the steps of the Siting Process. However, many of the steps can be streamlined, and some might be combined. The important consideration is that the process should not shortchange community input and that the result is as acceptable to the community as the result of a longer process would be. There is a need for clearer criteria for when the Siting Process needs to be applied or when an alternative process should be used.
2. Where land must be acquired immediately or be lost to other bidders in the market, the land acquisition process can be decoupled from the Siting Process. This would account for situations where the County already owns a property or must complete the land transaction sooner than even a streamlined Siting Process could be completed. To anticipate the need for fast land acquisition, the County can estimate its long-term needs for additional property and prioritize the areas where property will be acquired when available.

One option would be to use the siting process to consider multiple sites including existing sites as well as sites being acquired. The land acquisition could proceed in parallel with the Siting Process. The Siting Process might eventually identify a different site as the preferred site. The initial site could then be considered for a different use or sold, though some transaction costs may be incurred.
3. The Siting Process should apply to long-term leases of five years or longer or shorter term leases of sites or facilities with significant community impact. We propose that the County Board receive input from County staff and appropriate Commissions, Advisory Boards and neighborhood associations to determine criteria for siting and recommendations for when the Siting Process needs to be applied for leases. The Siting Process should be replaced by other administrative procedures when the impact is determined to have minimal community impact.
4. The County may not apply the full siting process where the Master Plan already identified the specific site. Relevant Advisory Boards, the Planning Commission's Site Plan Review Subcommittee and the full Planning Commission would continue to consider implementation issues for sites with substantial changes and significant impacts. An

administrative process would be sufficient for changes with minimal impacts.

Where the site has not yet been established, the Siting Process should be applied.

5. The Siting Process covers existing facilities when a proposed change would significantly change an existing use.
6. A professional facilitator should be used to work with citizen/staff, fact finding or working groups.
7. When siting issues involve schools, they should be encouraged to follow the Siting Process.
8. Anticipate planned projects so the Siting Process is timely. This should include listing planned projects on a yearly basis. In addition, the County should establish an internal oversight process in the County Manager's Office to ensure the timely implementation of the Siting Process.
9. Technology should be utilized to broaden opportunities for citizen participation including e-mail.