

**ARLINGTON COUNTY
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 414
Arlington, Virginia 22201**

April 14, 2021

Honorable Matt de Ferranti
Chair, Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Febrey-Lothrop Historical Designation

Dear Chair de Ferranti,

At its March 17 meeting the Park and Recreation Commission received a briefing on the current issues concerning the Febrey-Lothrop Estate. At this point, given our understanding of the narrowness of the proposal we do not have a formal position on historical designation. However, we wanted to offer the following perspectives.

The commission has long supported planning for open space coordinated with possibilities for historical preservation. One aspect of the current item under consideration is focused on possible planning for historic preservation and affordable housing. These are worthy and important topics for the county, but do not consider other established county priorities and planning documents that already have a stated policy for this site.

We have made our position clear to the Board several times in the past concerning the desirability of the Febrey-Lothrop site for parks and open space. The PRC's guiding document, the 2019 Public Spaces Master Plan identifies this property as a Generational or Unique Opportunity. As stated, the county policy for this type of property is: "The intent for potentially acquiring these properties is to expand the public park system and to protect these spaces from development." We fully understand the fiscal challenges the county is facing but it has long disappointed us that the County Board has not consistently developed a park land acquisition fund that can be used when long term opportunities arise--regardless of shorter-term fiscal pressures.

In terms of any subsequent planning envisioned by the county for this site, we would urge the Board to add in considerations for public open space for the site, whether it is developed privately, publicly, or in combination. One could imagine for example, planning for whatever type of building takes place that incorporates an attractive design that includes natural and casual use features.

Finally, in discussions with other interested parties we have been emphasizing that when looking at open space acquisition or the preservation of established natural resources, the county should take into account, in a more unified fashion, historic building and artifacts preservation--and vice versa. The two plans currently under development, the Historic Preservation Master Plan and the Forestry and Natural Resources Plan could provide strong coordinated language and guidance for future efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William W. Ross".

William Ross
Chair, Park and Recreation Commission

cc: Members, Arlington County Board
Members, Planning Commission
Members, Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board
Members, Forestry and Natural Resources Commission
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation