

DRAFT

Ms. Jennie T. Davis
South Arlington Coalition of Civic Associations
3004 South 19th Street
Arlington, Virginia 22204

Dear Ms. Davis:

I wish to express the appreciation of the members of the Barcroft School and Civic League (BSCL) to SACCA for initiating the proposal to improve the process for siting public facilities in Arlington County. The BSCL supports the concept of developing new guidelines for use by the County government and the community for determining sites for public facilities. The idea is to put guidelines in place before the next unwanted facility is proposed to avoid the negative neighborhood responses evoked by the current case-by-case approach.

The BSCL provides the following additional comments and recommendations:

1. Since the process of developing the guidelines is a matter of Countywide interest, the responsibility for sponsoring the guidelines project should be transferred to the Arlington County Civic Federation. This will insure the broadest representation of communities and civic interest groups in Arlington.
2. The preparation of the guidelines should be a joint process between representatives of the communities in Arlington and the County government, as proposed. This guidelines project should be supported by a paid facilitator who is experienced in conflict resolution. The benefits expected from a facilitator are impartiality, conflict resolution skills, accountability for timely and relevant intermediate and final results, adherence to a schedule, minimal administrative burden on County government personnel, and ideally, prior experience with siting issues.
3. The cost of this initiative should be included in the County budget and funded by the County government. It is our belief that the siting guidelines will ultimately be a cost savings to the County in resolving future siting disputes. Equally important, however, is the consensus of the community in the decision-making process. We recognize the difficulty of identifying funding, but we also think it very important to find a better way to resolve issues that are so divisive and generate such bitter feelings.

The guidelines that result from the joint effort should include:

- early identification of siting needs and involvement of a broad-based citizen group,
- a process that strives for consensus and is less divisive than the current process,
- a process that promotes timely and cost-effective decision making, and
- a process that promotes a community-wide perception of fairness and satisfaction with decisions and the decision-making process, thus strengthening the cohesiveness of the County.

Sincerely,

Lawrence P. Goldschmidt
President, Barcroft School and Civic League