

**Columbia Heights Civic Association**  
**Post Office Box 41501**  
**Arlington, Virginia 22204**



October 20, 2016

To: Arlington County Board Chairman Libby Garvey  
Board Member Jay Fisette  
Board Member John Vihstadt  
Board Member Katie Cristol  
Board Member Christian Dorsey

Re: Acquisition of 1204 S. Cleveland Street  
RPC 32011010 and RPC 32011017  
1200 S. Cleveland Street, RPC 32011009

Arlington County currently has an opportunity to save a unique piece of urban forestry at 1204 S. Cleveland Street. Attached are pictures of a massive Willow Oak on this site that provides tree canopy for over half the block. This year school children counted 17 bird nests in this one tree alone. The only other Willow Oak of this magnitude lies in a remote area of Arlington National Cemetery. This tree is next to a neighborhood street, easily accessible to everyone. In addition, the property has seven other mature trees, including large specimens of Magnolia, Virginia Pine, American Holly and Japanese Maple. It is a forest-like oasis in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

The owner of this property is a disabled veteran who wishes to monetize the value of this property to move toward retirement. His current plan, with the help of a developer, is to clear-cut the property and combine it with the adjacent lot at 1200 S. Cleveland Street, to construct two large homes. His plan is in a mature stage and the developer anticipates a decision on demolition permits this November. However, the owner states that he would be amenable to selling these properties to Arlington County for the purpose of creating a neighborhood park. Arlington County must move quickly if it is to take advantage of this opportunity. The developer has just informed us that the URD hearing before Planning and Zoning is scheduled November 16. If the County does not make an offer on these properties in writing prior to this date, the trees will be demolished. A recent announcement by Chair Libby Garvey indicates that \$17.8 million in FY 2016 budget close-out funding is available.

Our civic association is petitioning the County to purchase the properties for conservation purposes. The trees we wish to save are primarily on two parcels associated with 1204 S. Cleveland. However, if the County also purchased 1200 S. Cleveland it would allow a park to be developed that would include the corner of Cleveland and S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. We need to conserve green space in Arlington, and this is a unique opportunity. Currently we are submitting an amendment to our Neighborhood Plan to do

just that. In addition, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee passed a resolution on October 13, 2016 that states:

The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee strongly supports Arlington County acquiring land to establish new, free-standing parks, and to expand existing parks, as a key principle of neighborhood conservation. This is in accord with the Public Spaces Master Plan.

We are in contact with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, which is also interested in preserving this property and could coordinate with Arlington County toward that end. Time is of the essence. We urge your immediate support for this purchase.

Sincerely,

*Sarah McKinley*

Sarah McKinley  
Vice President

Andrea Reese, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust  
Phil Klingelhofer, Urban Forestry Commission  
Kasha Helget and Jo Allen, Arlington Master Naturalists  
Caroline Haynes and Edith Wilson, Parks and Recreation Commission  
Nancy Iacomini and Erik Gutshall, Planning Commission  
Jane Rudolph and Lisa Grandle, Parks and Recreation  
Mark Schwartz, Carole Mitten, Michelle Cowan and Robert Sharpe, County Manager's Office  
Arlova Vonhm, Arlington County Zoning Administrator