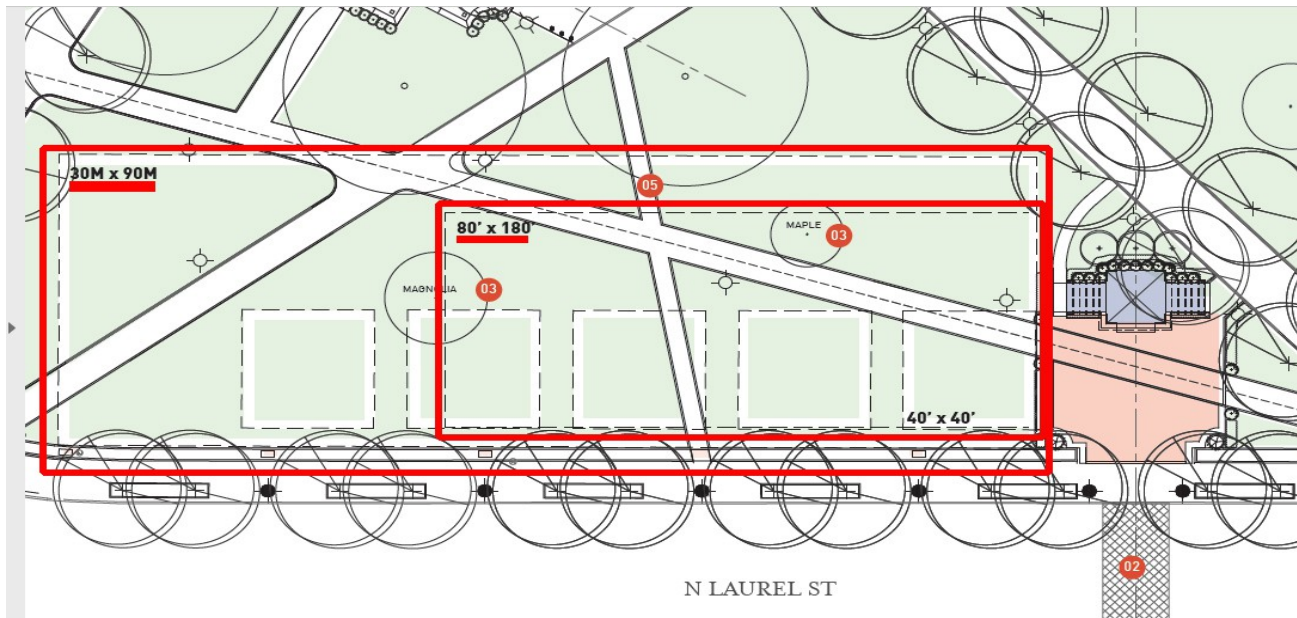


Dear UDC Secretary Joshua Son and Members of the Urban Design Committee,

I am writing with strong opposition to the proposed Laurel Street Venue for Monroe Park. Based upon a 3/28/17 presentation by 3North, the architect for the Monroe Park Conservancy, the proposed Laurel Street Venue has obvious and fatal defects in the character, location and extent of the project.

The proposal to have tent space to accommodate tents as large as 295 feet by 98 feet (90 meters by 30 meters) and 180 feet by 80 feet is an outrageous overreach in the extent of the project:



The Altria (Landmark) Theater is a huge facility with a frontage on Laurel Street of 200 feet. The proposed tent size of 295 feet is 95 feet in excess of the length of the Altria Theater:



The Altria Theater has a 200 foot frontage.

Unreasonably large tents are proposed for Monroe Park that are 295 feet long.

The Monroe Park Master Plan states that the target density for Monroe Park is 100 persons per acre, yet the 295 foot tent would cover 2/3 of an acre and hold 3000 persons, over 30 times this target density.

The proposed tenting is out of character with the Victorian park. It dwarfs the other features of the park and cuts off sight lines into the park. Sight lines into the Victorian Monroe Park before tents erected:



Sight lines into the Victorian Monroe Park are terminated by the excessive extent of the proposed tenting which covers historic walkways, as shown in my illustration:



The location of the tenting is inappropriate and not respectful of the resources in the park. Instead of placing removable tents around the existing resources of the park, the plan calls for two healthy, mature magnolia and maple trees (highlighted below) to be cut down for tenting:



This magnificent magnolia tree, located near the Va. Department of Historic Resources Monroe Park highway marker, is proposed to be cut down as a result of the inappropriate location and extent of the proposed party-pad tenting for the Laurel Street Venue:



This beautiful maple tree, photographed with its bright autumn foliage, is proposed to be cut down as a result of the inappropriate location and extent of the proposed tenting for the Laurel Street Venue (photo source, Richmond Times Dispatch):

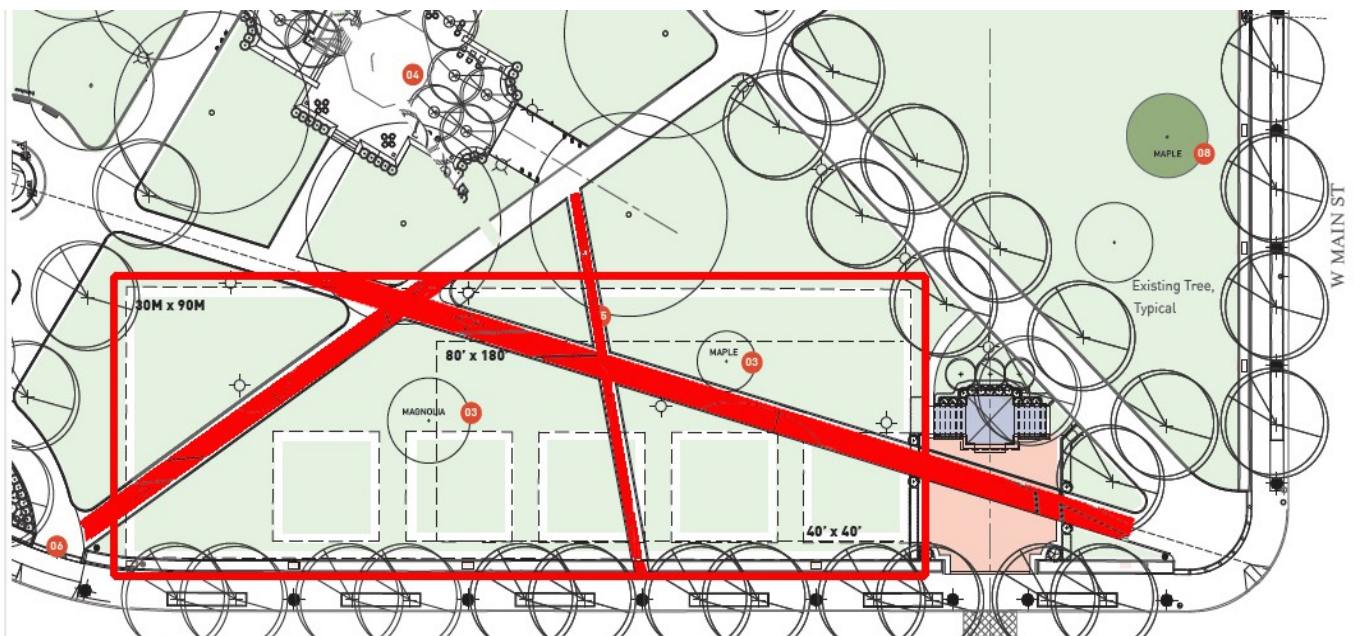


The Monroe Park Master Plan details the importance of retaining the trees species that were of the type planted during the park's period of significance. (However, by important contrast, nowhere in the Monroe Park Master Plan are there any references to tents as significant features of the park.) The defining character of the park is violated by removing significant trees, such as the healthy maple and magnolia trees for tents, which detract from the park's Victorian character. The Monroe Park Master Plan makes a particular reference to the significance of retaining Magnolia trees: Elements contributing to the historic park include, ***“Magnolias: These are the park's only existing evergreen trees that date to the Period of Significance”***

The Conservancy recently, without approval from the UDC, removed at least 14 mature trees from Monroe Park. Ironically, instead of configuring tents in the location of the park's treeless areas resulting from this decimation of the tree canopy, the Conservancy is now proposing to cut down two more healthy, mature trees. (They have proposed replacing these with trees that would take over a generation to mature to the same stature; one replacement tree is proposed to be planted at the very location where healthy mature trees were recently removed, allegedly for “bio-retention.”)

The huge tents proposed for the Laurel Street Venue further violate the character of Monroe Park by covering large areas of the historic walkways, which are fundamental to the Victorian character of the park. This lack of respect for the historic walkways of the park is counter to the Monroe Park Master Plan, which cites the pathways as important historic features of the park: ***“Contributing elements: Pathway Configuration: The radial design laid out by Cutshaw, reminiscent of the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 and other eighteenth and nineteenth century parks.”*** The extent of the dimensions of any tents erected in the park should be limited in size to 40 x 40 feet so that the tents do not overwhelm the historic features of the park, threaten trees, or need to cover walkways.

The ill-chosen location of the tents, as presented in the Laurel Street Venue plans, cover the historic pathways of the park (as shown below highlighted in red):



By limiting tent size to 40 x 40 feet, the tents can be placed between the historic pathways. No mature trees contributing to the significance of the park should be removed for temporary tenting. Massive tenting is not in keeping with the character of the historic Monroe Park and block sight-lines.

The extent of frequency of use of the tenting must be limited to no more than five times per year, and the duration of use of the tenting should be limited to being erected no longer than a weekend at a time. Greater extent of the tenting than five weekends per year would compromise the grass in this prominent portion of the park and disrupt public use of the city park. The application should not proceed without a programmatic description of when, how often, and for what purpose the tents are planned to be utilized and the rental fee proposed for the public park tenting.

The tenting and pavilion rentals in the Laurel Street Venue proposal are conceived as a revenue source for the Conservancy. But they will directly compete with the city-owned ballroom in the Altria Theater that is available for rent and accommodates 1,100 persons. The city will lose rental money for this space.

Fund-raising venues in the park by the Conservancy should not take precedent over other public uses of the park that are identified in the Monroe Park Master Plan.

The proposed tenting proposed in the Laurel Street Venue are in the wrong location because they conflict with the area of children resources, as shown in the Monroe Park Master Plan:



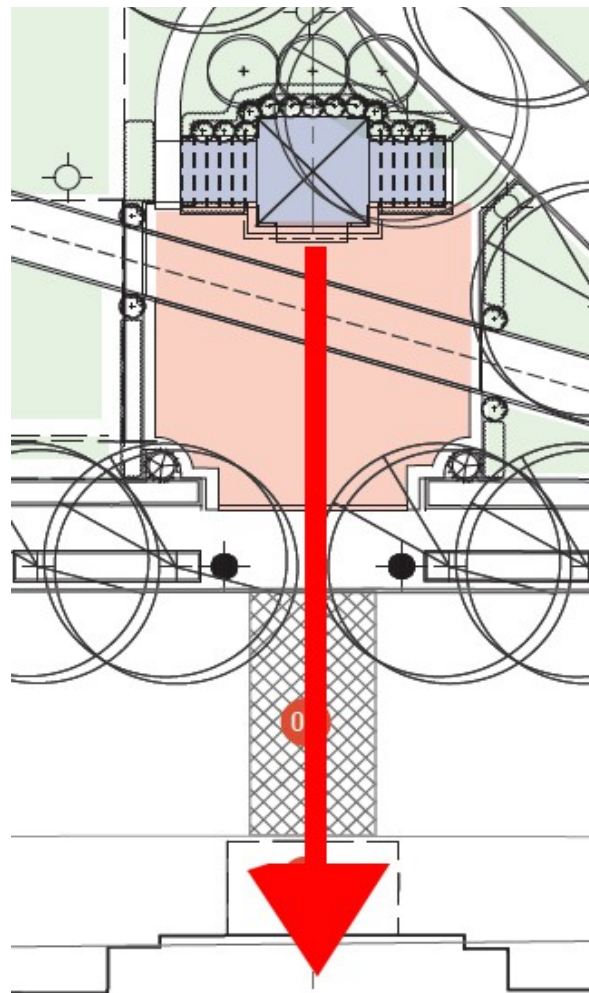
The highlighted red line (in the above map) shows the approximate footprint of the proposed tenting area as it eclipses and conflicts with the area approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan reserved for children resources. The Monroe Park Master Plan includes children as an important clientele of the park, and this area was dedicated as a safe area for children resources, including a carousel and giant map.

The Monroe Park Conservancy is tasked with implementing the Monroe Park Master Plan that was developed with great public input. But the Monroe Park Master Plan is being disregarded by removing the proposed resources for children. The location of the proposed giant tenting is inappropriate because the footprint of the tents cover the location of the planned carousel, giant map, and safe area for children. Without explanation or public input, the application for the Laurel Street Venue reports that the carousel, which is included in the Master Plan, *“has been phased out.”* When questioned, the Conservancy representative stated that the carousel would be *“too expensive,”* but on-line pricing indicates that a carousel could be purchased for under \$400,000, the amount that the Conservancy is proposing to spend on the proposed pavilion.

Monroe Park has historically been an important resource for families in the neighborhoods, including the Oregon Hill neighborhood, adjacent to the city park. This importance was reflected in the Monroe Park Master Plan by the inclusion of a safe area set aside for features friendly to children and families. It is unacceptable that the Conservancy is now disregarding the Monroe Park Master Plan and displacing the family-friendly venue with massive tents.

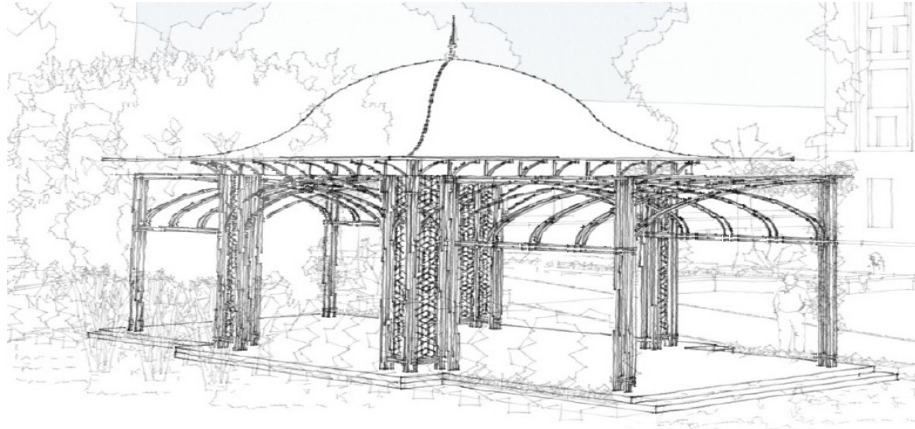
The proposed pavilion building is out of character of the Victorian Monroe Park. According to the UDC application, “An open structure will anchor the project site and build a connection to the Altria Theater, building upon the architectural language of both the Theater and the original Monroe Park Checker's [sic] House ...” The proposed pavilion wrongly orients toward the Altria Theater rather than to the park, and its faux-Moorish design elements with copper roof, result in a building clashing with the authentic character of the park. This pavilion's function, which apparently is primarily to raise income for the Conservancy through rental fees, is made redundant by the proposed tenting venues found in the application.

The location of the proposed fund-raiser pavilion incorrectly orients toward the Altria Theater rather than the Victorian Monroe Park:



The flawed character and design of the proposed pavilion resembles more a bus-stop rather than an authentic component of the city's oldest and most historic park. The application claims that the pavilion builds upon “the architectural language of both the [Altria] Theater and the original Monroe Park Checker's [sic] House...” Such a mish-mash of design elements would be laughable if it were not being proposed as the most visible feature of the city's oldest Victorian park.

While the pavilion was presented as a possible rental location for weddings (and it is reminiscent of the fake trellises that are assembled in bridal shows for photographic opportunities), the faux-Moorish influence does not fit the Victorian character of Monroe Park. The character of the proposed pavilion is a massive “fail” in its flawed goal of combining the Moorish-Revival design elements of the 1925 Altria Theater with the Art Deco design elements of the 1939 Checkers House:



Submitted below is an alternative proposal for the Laurel Street Venue: limiting to six tents 40 x 40 feet in size, locating these tents in open spaces where trees would not need to be removed, locating tents outside of the Victorian park walkways, restoring the carousel and giant map for children per the Monroe Park Master Plan, and eliminating the pavilion, which is redundant with the tent rentals and out of character with the period of historical significance of the park. The six 40 x 40 tents shown would not overwhelm the park and could accommodate 960 people. This alternative plan would limit tent use to five weekends per year:



In summary, I urge the Urban Design Committee to reject the proposed Laurel Street Venue as submitted because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project. The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park and conflicts with the arboreal resources and pathways of the park; the footprint of the proposed tenting conflicts with the children resources approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan. The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the pavilion's location and setting is flawed in that it orients to the Altria Theater rather than the historic park.

The Monroe Park Master Plan was the result of extensive public input and engagement, but this outlandish pavilion/tent proposal, which conflicts with the character of the Victorian park so jarringly, would never have been approved during the Master Planning process. While the Conservancy may view this venue as an opportunity for rental income, certainly the high standards of historical integrity of the park should not be compromised for this purpose. This is the city's oldest and most historic public park, yet this proposal is proceeding in a rushed fashion with little public input. It is important to recognize that the Conservancy has refused to allow neighborhood representation on its board, even after a resolution was passed by the Richmond City Council to encourage broadening the representation of its board.

Because Monroe Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register, I strongly urge a consultation with the talented staff of the Va. Department of Historic Resources before this proposed Laurel Street Venue proceeds any further.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

Charles Pool
421-1/2 S. Laurel Street
Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 788-0359
March 30, 2017

From: [charles.woodson](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Robertson, Ellen F. - City Council](#); [Robins, Amy E. - City Council Office](#); [Olinger, Mark A. - PDR](#); [Stoney, Levar M. - Mayor](#); [Cuffee-Glenn, Selena - CAO](#); [thad williamson](#); [Julie Langan, DHR](#); [andrea@andrealevine.com](#); [andrew.gould@timmons.com](#); [Bryan Green](#); [ariaslic@comcast.net](#); [dave@johannasdesign.com](#); [dawnficks@gmail.com](#); [giles@groundworkva.org](#); [jnolt@glaveandholmes.com](#); [smithrd3@gmail.com](#); [Scott Burger](#); [Turk Sties](#); [caroline cox](#); [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#); [PKnecht@ghtc.org](#); [Jason Roop](#); [noliver@timesdispatch.com](#); [Don Harrison, WRIR](#); [Paige Mudd -- T-D Editor](#); [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#); [Barton Hinkle](#); [winthrop@winthroparchitecture.com](#); [Charles Pool](#); [Todd A. Culbertson](#)
Subject: Letter in opposition to the proposed Laurel St. Venue in Monroe Park
Date: Friday, March 31, 2017 11:39:53 AM

Dear Mr Son, Urban Design Committee Members and others,

I am writing to express my opposition to the application for the Laurel Street Venue being proposed at the April 6, 2017 meeting.

The deliberations for the 2008 approved Monroe Park master plan were quite specific in that the primary focus in the design was to be respectful of the Park's period of significance (1876-1907). The history of the park, as written by the late Tyler Potterfield, is prominently included in this master plan, which was done with the assistance of Rhoadside and Harwell. It is important to note that the master plan was extensively vetted by the public through a charette process and the representational make up of the Monroe Park Advisory Council (MPAC). I was happy to serve for three terms on the MPAC.

The current Laurel Street Venue application is in direct conflict with the approved master plan in its character, location and extent and it is disheartening to see the departure from a plan that was so well received by the UDC, Planning Commission and City Council upon its completion.

The character of the proposed venue is irreparably flawed in that it reverses the determination by the approved master plan that this area be designated as a children's resource area. A carousel, ice cream booth and other features designed to appeal to and attract children of all ages has been replaced in the "venue" proposal by a structure which clashes significantly with architecture extant during the park's period of significance. Much discussion took place during MPAC meetings regarding the fact that there were already enough features in the park and this was universally agreed upon.

The location for the proposed venue is also flawed in that it is redundant to the purpose of the Altria Theatre Ballroom, a newly renovated and beautifully appointed meeting venue owned by the city which many would consider currently under-utilized. In addition, in order to execute the proposed "venue" design, two beautiful, mature and healthy trees would be destroyed. In light of the fact that the historic tree canopy has already been extensively compromised, the loss of two more mature trees should be strongly discouraged.

The extent portion of the "venue" proposal is also flawed in that at 295 feet (or even at a much smaller footprint), the corporate tent area is out of proportion with the historic Victorian Park and removes most of an acre of public green space from public use for up to a month at a time. Currently, during major events such as the marathon and intercultural festival, the entire park is covered with tents and people from the community for a very brief period of time and this has worked fine for many decades. The newly designated corporate tent area will not change this traditional layout policy. The proposed tent footprint is specifically designed for corporate events lasting up to a month and this corporate event use is a phenomenon only in existence during the last few years.

I strongly urge the members of the Urban Design committee to vote against this "venue" proposal and suggest that the applicants turn to the Altria Theatre Ballroom for an appropriate alternative to this destructive and inappropriate concept.

Sincerely,

Charles Todd Woodson, executive director
Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council. inc.

302 S Cherry St
Richmond Va 23220
804-783-8829

From: [Scott Burger](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#)
Subject: In opposition to Laurel Street Venue at Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 10:59:27 AM

To members of the Urban Design Committee,

As a citizen of the City of Richmond, I wish to express my strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" plan.

This historic park does not need these large tents.

I am very upset about losing even more mature trees to this plan.

The corporate 'monetizing' of the park conflicts with public uses, including a planned children's area.

The design of the pavilion is not in harmony with the historic character of the park.

And lastly, but not least, the Conservancy claims that these plans have been fully vetted by the public and that is simply not true. The 'programatic' proposed design is in conflict with this public park. It angers me that the Conservancy has still not included neighborhood representation on their board. This goes hand in hand with the overall feeling that this historic park is being privatized and being taken away from the public.

Sincerely,
Scott Burger
612 S. Laurel Street
804 714 5444

From: [Karen Radoulov](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Monroe Park
Date: Friday, March 31, 2017 6:01:38 PM

Dear UDC Secretary Josh Son and Members of the Urban Design Committee,

Please find my attached comment in strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park.

As detailed in the attached comment, I urge the Urban Design Committee to reject the proposed Laurel Street Venue in Monroe Park because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park

The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with the arboreal resources and pathways of the park

The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with the children resources area, as approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan

The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places;

The pavilion's location and setting is flawed in that it orients to the Altria Theater rather than the historic park.

The character of the mish-mash design of the pavilion -- claiming to build upon the architectural language of both the Moorish-Revival Altria Theater and the Art Deco Checkers House -- is massive design "fail"

The proposal has been rushed with little public input.

Thank you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and most historic park.

Sincerely,

Karen Radoulov

From: [Sarah Metzel](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Request: Save the trees
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 12:27:46 PM

Hello Mr. Son,

I am an undergraduate at VCU, and I pass by Monroe Park every day on my way to class. I'm requesting that you inform the Urban Design Committee at the hearing on April 6 that VCU students are against the removal of 2 more trees from Monroe park (the magnolia and maple meant to make room for tents). I find it despicable that 14 trees, that were undoubtedly decades old, have already been removed! Please leave these 2 trees alone.

Here is a Facebook conversation emerging on the topic: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1436034436609847?view=permalink&id=1878354035711216>

Thank you,

Sarah Metzel

--

Sarah Metzel
Virginia Commonwealth University - Class of 2019
International Relations Major & French Minor
Peace Corps Campus Ambassador at VCU
Vice President of Muevelo at VCU

From: [Angela M Worris](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#)
Subject: Urban Design Committee and Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 3:03:43 PM

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee,

I am in strong opposition to the proposed 'Laurel Street Venue' for historic Monroe Park. I urge you to reject the proposal because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

1. The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park.
2. The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with existing mature healthy trees and the pathways in the park.
3. The location of the tenting conflicts with the children's resource area, as approved in the Monroe Park Master plan.
4. The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian Park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National register of Historic Spaces.
5. The character of the mish-mash design of the pavilion -claiming to build upon the architectural language of both the Moorish-revival Altria Theatre and the art deco Checkers house is a massive design fail.
6. The proposal has been rushed with very little public input.

Thank you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and historic park.

I am a city resident and an alumni of VCU and now a VCU employee who has wanted to see improvements to this Park for 20 plus years. The creation of such tenting infrastructure is not an added benefit to the beautiful green space. It will mean tearing down more trees and destroying the canopy that should be preserved.

I am someone who ate lunch in this park frequently and strolled through every morning on my way to work. The tree canopy and walkable green space are the essential design elements that should only be considered for the future of this park.

Please consider all of the above points.

Thank you again.

Angela Worris

****The above opinions are my opinions only and not that of VCU and its administration.

--

Angela Worris
Electronic Serials Specialist

Virginia Commonwealth University
James Branch Cabell Library

**901 Park Ave
Richmond, VA 23284**

We're not our bikes, we're not our cars, and - thank freaking goodness - we are not our Segways. We are only ourselves. Bike Snob NYC

From: [John Moser](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Monroe Park "Laurel Street Venue"
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 3:06:17 PM

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee:

I understand that the Monroe Park Conservancy is requesting to change their plans for renovating Monroe Park and have requested permission to construct something they are calling the "Laurel Street Venue" in the Park. I am writing to object to this change because:

- By dedicating a large portion of the park to use for corporate events, this represents a significant deviation from the purposes of this park as a public space. The events tent encroaches on the public space in the park.
- The proposed "Laurel Street venue" conflicts with the historic character of the park and also appears to conflict with the characteristics that earned the park a listing on the National Register of Historic Spaces.
- The proposed development is not consistent with the Master Plan for the park and may mean that that the "children's resource center" proposed in the master plan will be threatened.
- The plan requires removal of additional trees, which would be a disgrace, considering that many trees have already been removed from the park without approval and in conflict with the park Master Plan.

I respectfully request that you deny, disallow and do whatever is required to stop construction of the proposed "Laurel Street Venue."

When City Council was considering giving control of this park to the Monroe Park Conservancy, I attended City Council meetings and spoke against the idea. Since that time, I have been distressed to see, on frequent occasions, that the conservancy is not keeping commitments that they made as they have developed the park. They have not made efforts to modify their board of directors as they promised. They have not adhered to the master plan for the park. They have (illegally?) removed trees that were to have been maintained and have done so without advance permission. They are not providing good stewardship of this park and are not doing a good job for the city. The latest proposal for the "Laurel Street Venue" is another step in the wrong direction. I urge you to deny this proposed development.

Thank you.

Best regards,

John Moser
1409 Westbrook Ave
Richmond, VA, 23227

From: marschak@juno.com
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#)
Subject: Dismayed at plans for paved venue area in Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 3:08:05 PM

Dear Joshua Son and to all of the Urban Design Committee,

I was dismayed to hear of these plans to create a paved area (even with permeable paving) in Monroe Park across from the Altria Theatre. This dramatically departs from the area being used as a park. What is a park? "A large, public green area in a town used for recreation." Monroe Park is already a small scale park. Removing grass and trees from a significant area, further reduces it as a park. I understood that Richmond City Council had voted for Monroe Park to remain a City Park in perpetuity. This is a flagrant abuse of that concept, and, as a city resident who often went there, is not what I want in a City Park.

The Altria has huge areas unused within the building. There is no need for them to have additional event space.

This plan is being presented as a way to gain corporate funding, by creating this non-green paved space and renting it out. What good does corporate funding do when this use would destroy part of Monroe Park? Corporate funders should be approached based on their support for greenspace, not their willingness to have it paved over.

It is also not in accordance with the original design for Monroe Park as a Victorian City Square-type Park, which is the basis for its historical significance. Huge paved areas, and unsightly tents do not mesh with a Victorian era park.

This is a radical departure from the original design plans, and should not be supported by the Urban Design Committee. I urge you to vote against it.

Beth Marschak

Police Urge Americans to Carry This With Them at All Times
The Observer
<http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL3141/58e29d3a83f4c1d3a23f8st02duc>

From: [June Vranian](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Monroe Park obliteration
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 3:39:08 PM

I add my name to the request below, voicing my outrage at what the UDC is trying to cram down the throats of Richmonders who love and revere this park. With family members going back to the organization of this city almost two centuries ago, I view what your Committee is doing as an insult and discriminatory action to those who worked hard to make Richmond, and Monroe Park, special. A listing on the National Register of Historic Spaces is there for a reason, and the Committee seems to be ignorant of its significance. Shame to all who participate in this scam.

June Vranian

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee

I am in strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park. I urge you to reject the proposal because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

1. The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park.
2. The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with existing mature healthy trees and the pathways in the park.
3. The location of the tenting conflicts with the children's resource area, as approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan.
4. The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian Park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Spaces.
5. The character of the mish-mash design of the pavilion - claiming to build upon the architectural language of both the Moorish-revival Altria Theatre and the art deco Checkers house is a massive design fail.
6. The proposal has been rushed with little public input.

Thanks you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and historic park.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPad

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee

I am in strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park. I urge you to reject the proposal because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

1. The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park.
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6. The proposal has been rushed with little public input.

Thanks you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and historic park.

Sincerely,

From: [Paige Harvey](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Historic Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 8:54:30 PM

Dear UDC Secretary Josh Son and Members of the Urban Design Committee,

Please find my attached comment in strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park.

As detailed in the attached comment, I urge the Urban Design Committee to reject the proposed Laurel Street Venue in Monroe Park because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

- 1-The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park
- 2-The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with the arboreal resources and pathways of the park
- 3-The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with the children resources area, as approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan
- 4-The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 5-The pavilion's location and setting is flawed in that it orients to the Altria Theater rather than the historic park.
- 6-The character of the mish-mash design of the pavilion -- claiming to build upon the architectural language of both the Moorish-Revival Altria Theater and the Art Deco Checkers House -- is massive design "fail"
- 7-The proposal has been rushed with little public input.

Thank you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and most historic park.

Sincerely,

C. Paige Harvey

4716 Cutshaw Ave.

Richmond 23230

From: [Robert Farley](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#)
Subject: Monroe Park,
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 7:10:16 PM

Dear Joshua Son and to all of the Urban Design Committee,

I was dismayed to hear of these plans to create a paved area (even with permeable paving) in Monroe Park across from the Altria Theatre. This dramatically departs from the area being used as a park. What is a park? "A large, public green area in a town used for recreation." Monroe Park is already a small scale park. Removing grass and trees from a significant area, further reduces it as a park. I understood that Richmond City Council had voted for Monroe Park to remain a City Park in perpetuity. This is a flagrant abuse of that concept, and, as a city resident who often went there, is not what I want in a City Park.

The Altria has huge areas unused within the building. There is no need for them to have additional event space.

This plan is being presented as a way to gain corporate funding, by creating this non-green paved space and renting it out. What good does corporate funding do when this use would destroy part of Monroe Park? Corporate funders should be approached based on their support for greenspace, not their willingness to have it paved over.

It is also not in accordance with the original design for Monroe Park as a Victorian City Square-type Park, which is the basis for its historical significance. Huge paved areas, and unsightly tents do not mesh with a Victorian era park.

This is a radical departure from the original design plans, and should not be supported by the Urban Design Committee. I urge you to vote against it

Robert M. Farley
Stratford Hills, 23235

From: [Katie Ryan](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Richmond Resident and Oregon Hill Family Against "Laurel Street Venue"
Date: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 12:17:13 PM
Attachments: [pastedImage.png](#)

Hi Joshua I stand with the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association against the construction of the Laurel Street Venue. Below is our letter of concerns. Thank you,

Katie Ryan

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee

I am in strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park. I urge you to reject the proposal because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

1. The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park.
2. The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with existing mature healthy trees and the pathways in the park.
3. The location of the tenting conflicts with the children's resource area, as approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan.
4. The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian Park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Spaces.
5. The character of the mish-mash design of the pavilion - claiming to build upon the architectural language of both the Moorish-revival Altria Theatre and the art deco Checkers house is a massive design fail.
6. The proposal has been rushed with little public input.

Thanks you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and historic park.

Sincerely,

406 S Laurel St.

From: [Bryan Connolly](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#)
Subject: Opposition to Laurel Street Venue at Monroe Park
Date: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 4:54:24 PM

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee,

I, as a VCU student and citizen of Richmond, wish to voice my strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park. I urge you to reject the proposal because of the extensive flaws in character, location and extent of this project:

1. The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park.
2. The location of the proposed tenting conflicts with existing mature healthy trees and the pathways in the park.
3. The location of the tenting conflicts with the children's resource area, as approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan.
4. The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian Park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Spaces.
5. The character of the mish-mash design of the pavilion - claiming to build upon the architectural language of both the Moorish-revival Altria Theatre and the art deco Checkers house is a massive design fail.
6. The proposal has been rushed with little public input.

Thank you for your close attention to this important issue regarding our city's oldest and historic park.

Sincerely,
Bryan Connolly

From: [Xine Bouthillier](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#); [Stoney, Levar M. - Mayor](#)
Subject: Monroe Park
Date: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 2:20:46 PM

Dear Joshua Son and to all of the Urban Design Committee,

I was dismayed to hear of these plans to create a paved area (even with permeable paving) in Monroe Park across from the Altria Theatre. This dramatically departs from the area being used as a park. What is a park? "A large, public green area in a town used for recreation." Monroe Park is already a small scale park. Removing grass and trees from a significant area, further reduces it as a park. I understood that Richmond City Council had voted for Monroe Park to remain a City Park in perpetuity. This is a flagrant abuse of that concept, and, as a city resident who often went there, is not what I want in a City Park.

The Altria has huge areas unused within the building. There is no need for them to have additional event space.

This plan is being presented as a way to gain corporate funding, by creating this non-green paved space and renting it out. What good does corporate funding do when this use would destroy part of Monroe Park? Corporate funders should be approached based on their support for greenspace, not their willingness to have it paved over.

It is also not in accordance with the original design for Monroe Park as a Victorian City Square-type Park, which is the basis for its historical significance. Huge paved areas, and unsightly tents do not mesh with a Victorian era park.

This is a radical departure from the original design plans, and should not be supported by the Urban Design Committee. I urge you to vote against it.

Xine Bouthillier, REALTOR®Lic#209450

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Richmond, VA 23226
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www.smallrealestate.com

From: [Jennifer H](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#); [Robins, Amy E. - City Council Office](#); [Stoney, Levar M. - Mayor](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#)
Subject: OHNA: Comment on Laurel Street Event Venue
Date: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 12:38:18 PM

Dear UDC Secretary Son and Members of the Urban Design Committee,

The Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association (OHNA) met on Tuesday, March 28th to hear a presentation from 3North on the Laurel Street Event Venue.

After a lengthy discussion, the neighborhood association voted to oppose the proposed project for the following reasons:

The extent of the proposed tenting is grossly out of scale with the park. The length of Altria Theater fronting Laurel Street is 200 feet. The largest tent size proposed will be 295 feet in length, well in excess of the length of the Altria Theater. The Monroe Park Master Plan states that the target density for Monroe Park is 100 people per acre, yet the 295 foot tent would cover 2/3 of an acre and hold 3000 persons, over 30 times the target density.

The plan for the proposed location of the tents calls for the removal of more trees and blocks pedestrian traffic in the park. The Monroe Park Conservancy was not able to give us an idea, at this time, of how many large scale events will be held in the park per year nor the length of time that the proposed tents will be blocking access to a portion of the park.

The location of the proposed tents conflicts with the area of the park dedicated to children's resources, as approved in the Monroe Park Master Plan. We are unaware that the Monroe Park Master Plan was modified to remove the children's resources and replaced with an event venue.

The proposed pavilion conflicts with the character of the Victorian park and does not reflect the period of significance (1876-1907) of Monroe Park, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The pavilion's location and setting is flawed in that it orients to the Altria Theater rather than the historic park.

The application claims that the pavilion builds upon "the architectural language of both the [Altria] Theater and the original Monroe Park Checker's [sic] House..." The combining of the 1925 Moorish Revival design elements of the Altria Theater with the Art Deco design

elements of the 1939 Checkers House does not fit the Victorian character of Monroe Park.

The proposal has been rushed with little public input. In addition, the public is still waiting for the diversification of the Monroe Park Conservancy Board to include representatives from the surrounding communities, per City Council ordinance.

In conclusion, we urge the members of the Urban Design Committee to vote against this proposal in its current form.

Thank you
Jennifer Hancock
OHNA, President

From: [Ray Bonis](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#)
Subject: Save Monroe Park
Date: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 4:11:41 PM

Dear City Leaders:

Please save the trees in Monroe Park and do not let the Altria Theatre folks build anything in the park. Think about the history of the park and its future. Once Altria has a foot print in the park it can only get larger.

thanks,
Ray

--

"More Barn!" - Neil Young, late 1971.

Ray Bonis
Senior Research Associate
Special Collections and Archives
James Branch Cabell Library
VCU Libraries
901 Park Ave. VCU Box 842033
Richmond, VA 23284-2033

From: [Catherine Welsh](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Monroe Park
Date: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:50:26 PM

Please deny the Monroe Park Conservancy permit to cut down more healthy trees in Monroe Park. This is supposed to be a green space not a concrete venue. Thank you. Catherine Welsh

From: [Don Harrison](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Vote no on the Laurel Street Venue
Date: Thursday, April 06, 2017 1:07:48 AM

Dear Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee,

I am in strong opposition to the proposed "Laurel Street Venue" for historic Monroe Park. I urge you to reject the proposal because of the MANY flaws in character, location and goals of this project.

But I also urge you to reject this proposal because it's one of the worst examples yet of the city contracting with a public/private entity and then allowing the entity to do whatever it wants with city resources -- altering a carefully-drafted master plan, destroying city trees, selling our public space to the highest corporate bidder. Your decision will say a lot about the state of city planning in 2017.

This has also been pushed through with little or no public input, and the Monroe Park Conservancy agreed three years to diversify its board to allow more neighborhood representation. That has yet to happen and the results are woeful proposals like this one.

This is the city's oldest and most historic public park, and enough is enough. I urge you to vote no to this "Laurel Street Venue" plan.

Sincerely,

Don Harrison
3rd district