

From: [Dray, Mark](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); craig.bieber@richmondgove.com; [Dray, Mark](#); [Penelope Fletcher \(pcfletcher8@gmail.com\)](mailto:Penelope.Fletcher@pcfletcher8@gmail.com)
Subject: April 6th, the Urban Design Committee
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 6:21:32 PM

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

This email pertains to the Monroe Park Conservancy's (and perhaps the City's) request to approve several minor changes to the Monroe Park Master Plan and approved construction drawings so that the construction phase of the renovation of Monroe Park might finally proceed. I am a resident of the Prestwoud and have been intimately involved in and concerned about the planning for and the proposed changes to the Park that is in my front yard. I whole heartedly support the proposed changes and hope that the Committee will act favorably on all of them at its meeting Thursday morning.

I have seen the 6 point form letter circulated by Mr. Woodson to encourage folks to write in opposition to the requested changes. I strongly disagree with the positions taken in the letter. Set forth below are a few comments on the points raised in the draft letter recently circulated by Mr. Woodson:

- The changes to the Laurel and Main Streets corner of the Park were requested to facilitate better use of another major asset of our City—the Altria Theater. Although there will be some tenting (and the tents aren't small) that inconveniences users of the Park from time to time, the main contemplated and continuing tenting function lasts only a couple weeks and provides major financial and other benefits to the City of Richmond. If Mr. Woodson and others are concerned about any temporary tenting that may occur, they should have been more concerned about the major permanent dormitory being built by VCU between the Park and Oregon Hill.
- The tents in question have been used for at least the last two years. They were constructed properly, secured and kept clean. Pleasantly surprising to me, the grass—under the tents—was

alive and recovered quickly and well both years.

- There are in fact a couple of additional trees that will be removed under the planned changes and I am not crazy about this but am satisfied that the plans to address this issue as well as the many additional—original pallet—trees that will be replanted more than make up for this necessary accommodation to allow better and more efficient long term utilization of the Park.
- I am not aware of the “children’s resource” issue but assure you that the Park is well used by VCU students and others and will hopefully be more family oriented when if ever it reopens. The bigger issue is keeping the Park closed for so many additional months because of the minor objections of a few people that are really beyond logic rather than getting on with the renovation.
- I have seen the drawings of the proposed pavilion and, though not an architect, was pleasantly surprised that it seemed to mesh so well with both the Altria Theater and the Checkers House. While I want to preserve the historic character of the Park, I also want it to work as well with a neighborhood soon to be inhabited by the ICA.
- I do not think anyone involved in the history of the renovation of Monroe Park could suggest in good faith that the public has not had an opportunity to provide input or that anything related to it has been rushed! Indeed, I have offered to sit down with Mr. Woodson and address some of his concerns and questions about the Park and he never even bothered to respond.

In short, I think all citizens of our City should have an opportunity to comment on issues and they have. I now hope you will approve the requested changes on Thursday so that this project can get under way and ultimately finished. It has taken far too long.

Thanks for your consideration. I can be reached at 804.334.8143

should you have any questions.

Mark Dray

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From: [Joni Dray](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
Subject: Monroe Park Renovation
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 11:20:03 PM

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

I am writing to add my voice to those of others urging you and your Committee to approve the suggested changes and construction drawings so that the renovation of Monroe Park can begin.

I live at the Prestwould, actually there are about 56 homes here, which would be quite a few houses - and all of my neighbors love the Park. It is, in fact, our front yard!!

I care deeply that the right thing be done and I do not say that lightly. The plans for this park have been worked on for years. There has been plenty of time for folks to be heard and changes made. It is time for work to begin!!

The plans for the Park will assure it will be family and neighbor friendly as well as safer, cleaner and more attractive for all of our City's residents. Major work on infrastructure will assure the Park's health for years to come. The return to its original design is in keeping with its important historic place in our City. VCU students are big users now and the renovation will encourage many others to enjoy this very special green space in many different ways.

I have seen Mr. Woodson's recent letter and appeal to write in opposition. I do not know Mr. Woodson, but I know he does not live on the Park and much of what he is saying seems to simply be an effort to obstruct. I am aware he has taken similar actions regarding other projects in the City to which he has little connection. I find that frustrating and sad, as such actions take the emphasis away from the real and important issues at stake.

Quite simply, Monroe Park belongs to all of Richmond and deserves to be renovated and used by all.

I sincerely hope the Committee will support the plans and process already in place and allow this project to finally begin!

Joni Dray
The Prestwould
Richmond, VA 23220

From: [Sarah Brown](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); craigbieber@richmondgov.com
Subject: Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 10:39:28 PM

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

I am writing today in support of the Monroe Park Conservancy's proposal to move the event staging areas north of the Checkers house and across the street from the Altria Theater. I live in The Prestwold at 612 W. Franklin St. overlooking the park. For the 19 years that I have lived here I have tolerated and often enjoyed the multitudes of events that take place in and around the park. But for all those years this side of Monroe Park has been the staging area for most of the activities. There are often loud speakers with music blaring beginning around 7am right towards our building. We have to listen to heavy trucks moving things up and down the street with back-up warnings beeping loudly. We are a building that has 56 condominium homes, that are the only property taxes payers (there might be one home on Laurel) around the park since all buildings are owned by churches and VCU.

By setting aside the property across from Altria, it is more convenient for The Altria and the corporate entities can have events that focuses the venue on the surroundings and neighbors of the park that are not residential. It would simplify both events put on by The Cathedral and VCU as they can incorporate Cathedral Place and Laurel streets without blockading a major East bound thoroughfare, Franklin Street.

I thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,
Sally Brown
612 W. Franklin Street #5B
Richmond, VA 23220
804-334-3594

From: [Penelope Fletcher](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#)
Cc: [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
Subject: In support of the proposed plan for Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 10:58:41 AM

Mr. Son,

I want to let you and the UDC know how pleased we at The Prestwoud have been with the process leading up to work commencing on the Monroe Park renovation. As President of The Prestwoud Condominium Association, I have represented The Prestwoud with Alice Massie, Councilwoman Kim Gray and her office, and in a February meeting of the Department of Public Works. Great consideration has been given to explaining to our owners the proposed changes to the plan and detailing what has been done to date and what remains to be done. The Park is very much a part of our lives at The Prestwoud, and that has been well recognized in this process.

Early in March, Alice Massie, Conservancy President, came to a meeting about Monroe Park here at the Prestwoud where over 30 of our 56 units were represented and given ample opportunity to ask questions and give feedback. Later in March, she led a Saturday morning walking tour for another 25 - 30 participants from The Prestwoud, many of them representing those who could not come to the first gathering. (Councilwoman Gray also came to this park walk-through to be certain that any resident concerns could be addressed). As you can see, interest runs high at The Prestwoud, and we were most pleased with the plans detailed by Ms. Massie.

We understand that some trees will be sacrificed by the execution of the Plan, but we can see that careful thought and consideration has been given to their removal and replacement, and we happily anticipate the arrival of the many new trees that will soon grace what we think of as our front yard.

One change in particular was given particular attention during my meeting with the DPW and in Ms. Massie's time with Prestwoud residents — the event space and gazebo. What an improvement those changes will represent! We truly appreciate the planning and thought that went into those spaces. Rather than random special usage throughout the park, this busy aspect of park usage will be moved to Laurel Street, accommodating the traffic flow around this downtown park on Franklin and Main Streets. We at The Prestwoud feel this is a great improvement to the original plan, and it anticipates and encourages extensive usage of Monroe Park while it recognizes the needs of nearby residents and others. As consistent users of the park, we look forward to having the park well used in that area, and we look forward to using the gazebo and the park's many other features.

We anticipate that Monroe Park will soon be an active and vibrant hub for the City of Richmond, and we look forward to celebrating that day.
Penny Fletcher

Penelope C. Fletcher, President
Prestwoud Condominium Association
pcfletcher8@gmail.com
804-771-9859 (h.)
703-598-9225 (c.)

From: [holt.edmunds](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); craig.bieber@richmondgove.com
Cc: [Agelasto, Parker C. - City Council](#)
Subject: A neighbor supporting the Laurel Street Venue for Monroe Park
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 10:21:38 AM

Mr. Son and members of the Urban Design Committee-

I have been an Oregon Hill homeowner for almost twenty years but in October moved from Idlewood Ave. over to The Prestwoud on Franklin.

Now Monroe Park is my front yard and I am very enthused about the plans, and especially for the Laurel Street venue.

I attended the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Organization meeting last Tuesday where there was a lot of support for the plans. Admittedly, less than ten residents were concerned enough to show up for the presentation but overall I came away knowing that my neighbors had no deep seated opposition to the plans. There was some grumbling but a lot of positive comments as well.

What I particularly like about these plans is how they organize the temporary event tenting. In the past there was a hodge-podge of canvas and this new lay-out looks much better.

The pavilion will be a great asset as well. The sketches are very exciting.

The gazebo will be the perfect place for taking a break or as a meeting spot for my friends. It is an attractive, strong focal point tying in with the Altria theater. Soon I will be telling my friends to "Meet me at the gazebo".

Thank you for your close attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Holt Edmunds

612 W. Franklin St.

From: [MaryAnneRodriguez](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Cc: [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
Subject: Monroe Park Design
Date: Monday, April 03, 2017 2:49:38 PM

Dear Mr Son and members of the UDC:

I am addressing the change to the Monroe Park renovation plans:

I support the change of moving the events section to the corner of Laurel and Main Streets. The events section will create a contiguous events space and "blend" with events at the Altria theatre, making it similar to the city block on Grace where Dominion Arts Center encompasses several art spaces.

Thank you for consideration.

Mary Anne Rodriguez
612 W Franklin St., 12B
Richmond VA 23220
Sent from my iPad

From: [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Monroe Park Renovations - Letter from Councilwoman Kim Gray
Date: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 5:29:56 PM

Could you please file this email letter from Councilwoman Gray as part of your record for UDC 2017-12, concerning the Conceptual Location, Character and Extent review of the Laurel Street Event Venue?

Dear Mr. Son:

Please convey to the members of the Urban Design Committee that I stand in support of the proposed changes to the plan of renovation for Monroe Park encompassed by the Conceptual Location, Character and Extent review of the Laurel Street Event Venue. I join many of my constituents in lauding the process that has been undertaken by the Monroe Park Conservancy to notify and inform neighborhood associations and community groups of these changes. The Conservancy has made significant efforts to honor the history of the site and respect the natural environment in and around the park.

In particular the proposal for a gazebo and new event space across Laurel Street from the Altria Theater seems to be a harmonious addition to the Park and will better accommodate the traffic flow around W. Franklin and W. Main Streets. This event space will allow for thoughtful and well considered programming that will enrich the park's patrons and surrounding neighborhoods. Events sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University and the Cathedral will be greatly facilitated without blocking West Franklin Street, a major eastbound route to downtown.

The event venue will provide a family friendly location and help to make the Park a safer, cleaner and more attractive green space for all City residents. The renovations will ultimately encourage many new visitors to enjoy our City's largest park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly B. Gray, Council Member
Richmond 2nd Voter District

Craig K. Bieber
Liaison for The Honorable Kimberly B. Gray
Councilwoman, Richmond North Central 2nd Voter District
RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL
Richmond City Hall
900 E. Broad Street, Suite 305
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804.646.6532 (office)
804.814.3220 (mobile)
804.646.5468 (fax)
craig.bieber@richmondgov.com (email)
www.council.richmondva.gov (website)

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VISION Richmond City Council is committed to creating a vibrant community that is a great place to live, work, learn, play, visit and raise a family.

From: [Margaret Peters](#)
To: [Gray, Kimberly B. - City Council](#); [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#); [Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
Cc: ["Penelope Fletcher"](#)
Subject: Monroe Park renovation
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 12:38:49 PM

To the Honorable Kim Gray, Joshua Son, and Craig Bieber:

I have been a property- owning resident of the Prestwoud at 612 West Franklin Street for nearly fifteen years and have had a long interest in Monroe Park and its anticipated rejuvenation. I am a life-long preservationist with extensive experience in writing and evaluating both urban landscapes and neighborhoods, having worked as a historian and program manager at the Department of Historic Resources from 1968-2002. I should confirm that the Monroe Park Conservancy has shared all the plans for the park over several years, and the residents here have had ample opportunity both to examine the plans and offer comments.

I believe that the Conservancy has conscientiously worked to assure public access to the park while protecting the history and investment of renovation for future generations. Of notable interest to me is the ongoing awareness of the environmental value of the park as a sustainable presence in this historic urban neighborhood.

The plan for the Monroe Park must at the same time provide a sustainable future for the park. I strongly believe that, in light of the multiple entrances to the park, to establish a non-permanent tenting areas that is limited in scope and must be permitted , will not limit access to the park by all, nor compromise the integrity of the public space. Partnerships for events that can ensure the financial well being of the City will be critical to its long term success. Establishing event areas on Laurel Street will protect the interior as well as other perimeter areas from the potential abuse that can arise with scattered trucks needed for installation of temporary elements. By concentrating these events, the balance of the park can remain open to all without interruption. Recognition of the importance of the public venue at the Altria Theatre will enhance the future viability of the park without impeding the general public use and access.

With warmest regards,

Margaret T. Peters

Margaret T. Peters

Margaret Peters
612 W. Franklin St. 8A
Richmond, VA. 23220
804-644-0980
804-539-9558 (cell)

From: [GIL RODVELTZ](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Monroe Park
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 1:50:15 PM

Ladies & Gentlemen;

I support the Monroe Park Conservancy Plan as it is.....Its time to move forward and prevent death by more and further amendments.Keep the tenting area by Laurel St and restart construction.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gil Rodriguez MD
612 West Franklin St. Unit 12-B
Richmond,23220

From: [John Peters](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR; kimberley.gray@richmondgov.com; Bieber, Craig K. - City Council Office](#)
Cc: [Penelope Fletcher](#)
Subject: Conceptual Location, Character and Extent review of the Laurel St. Event Venue, 719 W. Franklin St., Planning Commission, April 17, 2017
Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 2:05:16 PM

I write to express my support for this matter now before the Planning Commission. I was a member of the Monroe Park Advisory Council, which developed the plan for renovation of Monroe Park, and served as a member of the City Planning Commission a number of years ago. Those of us who live at The Prestwoud have been kept fully advised by the Conservancy of its plans for and the progress of renovations to the Park. I understand that some have said that the proposed Laurel Street Event Venue will somehow limit access to the Park. While there may be some visual impact on access, that is all that there is. There is clearly no actual limitation on access to the park.

If Monroe Park is going to reach its ultimate potential, there are going to have to be some compromises to accommodate the vast and varied constituency that will naturally have legitimate expectations for this limited amount of parkland. Selfish interests should not prevail. It is essential that the park be financially sustainable and that opportunities to generate revenue be preserved. This is a thoughtful proposal. It would locate events on Laurel Street across from the Altria Theatre and other institutions. To some extent, it is a question of whether the erection of tents and the introduction of other even-related infrastructure is going to be limited and controlled or whether it is going to be scattered willy-nilly throughout the park (just as it has been for years now to the benefit of no one). The damage and abuse that occurs in the park during set-up for major events is considerable, as I have observed personally over a period of fifteen years. There should be specific provisions and locations for the handling of events in the park. To do otherwise is simply unacceptable. I urge that the Planning Commission approve the Laurel Street Event Venue. Thank you.

JOHN O. PETERS
612 W. FRANKLIN STREET, UNIT 8A
RICHMOND, VA 23220
JAYOH.PETERS@VERIZON.NET
(804)644-0980
CELL: (804)402-4850

From: [Gary Young](#)
To: [Son, Joshua L. - PDR](#)
Subject: Laurel Street Event Venue for Monroe Park
Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 2:06:14 PM

I am pleased to write in support of the Laurel Street Event Venue for Monroe Park as proposed by the Monroe Park Conservancy. A few weeks back I was privileged to hear Alice Massey explain this proposal and to see drawings of it and discuss the benefits it would have for so many people while still preserving the integrity of the restored green spaces in Monroe Park.

I moved to Richmond three years ago and am delighted to be part of the Richmond community and the Monroe Park neighborhood. The lovely historic Monroe Park is such an asset to our neighborhood and the city as a whole. It deserves to be properly restored, well-maintained, and a vital part of the neighborhood to be enjoyed by all.

The people of the Monroe Park Conservancy are to be commended for the careful thought they put into all of this and for their many months of effort to say nothing of their generous financial support. Though I live on a retirement income I made what for me was a significant donation to the Park and I hope to regularly donate as time passes.

Thanks again for your careful consideration and support of what is good for Monroe Park and our community.

Gary Young
612 W. Franklin St., Apt 8-B
Richmond, VA 23220