

Mayor Euille and Members of Council:

I am Katy Cannady. I live at 20 East Oak Street. I was unable to participate in the Open Space bus tour the Council organized during May. So last Sunday afternoon, I went on my own tour visiting all the addresses given in the open space report.

I now believe that there should have been two criteria the Open Space Steering Committee did not use: Accessibility and ease of conversion.

By accessibility I mean that in procuring open space, we should give a very high weight to property that is located in busy areas, visible to many passersby and if at all possible near to townhouses, apartments and condo buildings. I feel certain that almost everyone in this room tonight is a homeowner and either has lived here for many years or expects to live here long into the future. Much of our population at any given time is new to the city and living in apartments, condos and townhouses without much personal open space for themselves or for the young children who are often part of their households.

We need to consider their needs as much as our own. One of their needs is simply to be able to find the public parks without great effort. Nearness to multi-family housing is another plus. Ranking these attributes high is necessary if we really are to be "One Alexandria."

By ease of conversion, I mean land that can be converted to park and recreational uses without great expense to the city.

Under both my criteria, Second Presbyterian moves to the top of the list. This land looks like a beautiful park today. We could add a few picnic tables and pavilions like those at Fort Ward and I'm sure those picnic tables would be in use every weekend. The users would come from the Quaker Commons apartments, and the many apartments, condos and townhouses a very short distance away on Duke Street. We could plant a butterfly garden in one of the sunny spots and parents could use it to teach their young children a first lesson about nature.

If nearby residents with their own personal picnic tables and gardens don't want to share their neighborhood with those who lack those things, well shame on them.

I am on the board of a couple of organizations which from time to time need to reserve space in public buildings. I know from experience that public meeting places are not plentiful. The church building which is in good repair could serve some of that need. It could also be rented to congregations and other organizations. I say that for what it offers, this land is cheap. I note that the Clermont Cove, hidden away and in need of major work just to establish so much as a walking trail has an assessed value of around \$4 million. Yet the steering committee gave it a high ranking. I don't.

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Two properties other than Second Presbyterian that I thought worthy of consideration were the land at Seminary Road and Beauregard, very accessible and near a major apartment complex, and the land behind the Masonic Temple, because it could easily be converted to public use.

However, I have to say again that Second Presbyterian is the shining jewel of open space in this city which has so little. What a long remembered tragedy it will be if we lose it.

Thank you.