

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 7, 2005
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES K. HARTMAN, CITY MANAGER 
SUBJECT: OPEN SPACE STEERING COMMITTEE POCKET PARK NOMINATIONS

ISSUE: Report on the Open Space Steering Committee Pocket Park nominations.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Receive the Open Space Steering Committee's 2005 pocket park ranked list (attached);
- (2) Schedule and conduct a public hearing for at Council's September 20 public hearing meeting on the Committee's pocket park rankings, including the list of all nominated sites; and
- (3) Following the public hearing:
 - a. approve and adopt the Committee's ranked list of pocket park sites, or an amended version of that list. This list will include the pocket park properties in Alexandria that the City intends to consider for future acquisition; and
 - b. request the City Manager, after its public hearing and the approval of the ranked list of 2005 pocket park sites, to provide to Council by November 2005 an Action Plan for the City acquisition of one or more of the properties on the City Council's list of 2005 pocket park sites.

BACKGROUND

Attached is a ranked list of the nominated pocket park sites reviewed by the Open Space Steering Committee in June of 2005 (Attachment 2). For the related context of the list, this memo also updates Council on the implementation steps it and the Committee have taken over the last two years related to the approved Pocket Park Program.

As part of its early open space discussions, Council highlighted the need for pocket parks in the City and the particular problem involved with small, local pocket park proposals, competing with larger sites for priority or funding. In June of 2004, Judy Guse-Noritake and Eric R. Wagner, the

co-chairs of the Open Space Steering Committee (OSSC), proposed that the Committee formulate a specific recommendation to Council on the subject of pocket parks. Subsequently, Council directed the Committee to create a separate category for pocket parks, prepare a process for pocket parks consideration in the Open Space nomination process and report to the City Manager, for subsequent discussion with Council, on the subject.

In March 2005, Council approved the Committee's recommended pocket park definition, criteria for selection, its procedure for nominations by neighborhoods, and its recommendation that a minimum goal of 20% of the City's annual open space funds be used for acquisition of pocket parks (see approved Pocket Park Program, Attachment 1). Staff then wrote to all civic associations in the City, explaining the program and including the pocket park criteria and a nomination form. The deadline for nominations was extended to April 15, in order to allow sufficient time for interested groups to participate.

While the Pocket Park Program was developed and reviewed, the OSSC continued to receive additional nominations and take actions related to the City's general Open Space Program. A number of the properties nominated for the general Open Space Program qualified for the separate pocket park program, and upon its approval, were moved to that list for consideration. A number of pocket park nominations were received and in June 2005, staff and the Committee assessed the nominated properties' appropriateness as pocket parks. Based on portions of the information provided within the pocket park nominations, the Committee used the approved pocket park criteria to review and develop a ranked list of 19 properties (a locational map is included as Attachment 4).

Highest Ranked Pocket Park Sites (received a score of 14 or better out of 15):

- 2309 Mount Vernon Avenue
- 1&7 East Del Ray Avenue
- 301 LaVerne Avenue

Highly Ranked Sites (received a score of 10-13 out of 15):

- 11 North Quaker/3327 Duke Street
- 707 Russell Road
- 2207 Mount Vernon Avenue
- 4214 Duke Street
- 724-728 North Patrick Street
- 805, 809, 811 North Columbus Street
- 150 South Gordon Street
- 901 North Saint Asaph Street

Lower Ranked Sites (received a score of 8 or less out of 15):

- 1023 Duke Street
- 209 Pine Street
- 101-103 West Mount Ida Avenue
- 30 Rosecrest Avenue
- 106 East Nelson Avenue.
- 3500 Mount Vernon Avenue
- 3041, 3011 and 3107 Mount Vernon Avenue
- 3540 Commonwealth Avenue

A list of the highest ranked properties shows those sites that best met the pocket park criteria (Attachment 2).

One of the critical criteria for pocket parks is the extent to which neighborhoods, property owners, or citizen groups are willing to participate in the responsibility for the acquisition and/or maintenance of the parks, in order to show their commitment to the City effort, and to defray important budget dollars. Some of the nominations received did not address this point in sufficient detail, and staff contacted each of the nominators in order to further explore the level of existing and potential commitment. Supporting information was provided for some of the nominated sites. Attachment 3 provides a basic description of each nominated property, including the extent to which the community demonstrated support for the site. (Attachment 3a provides additional information received after the April 15, 2005, deadline).

Prior to the September 20 public hearing, owners of these 19 parcels will be notified of the OSSC recommendations and the date, time and place of the public hearing.

FISCAL IMPACT: Once a list of pocket parks has been adopted by Council, staff will develop an estimate of the acquisition costs and return to Council later in the fall with an overall plan for acquisition of one or more of the sites. The OSSC recommends that the Council adopted goal of *20% of the 1 cent tax set aside for open space acquisition being set aside for the Pocket Park Program each year* be continued. This amounts to about \$500,000 annually. Given that some of these proposed sites carry a price tag more than the City could afford for a pocket park (i.e., 901 North Saint Asaph is assessed for \$7.2 million and the State is marketing the property for \$12.0 million), only some of these parcels are likely to be feasible to purchase. For new pocket parks, funds for the design and development of the parks would need to be provided in the City's Capital Improvement Program, and funds for maintenance would need to be included as part of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities operating budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1. City of Alexandria Pocket Park Program
- Attachment 1a. Criteria for Pocket Park Selection
- Attachment 2. Pocket Park Ranked Nominations, 2005 and 2004
- Attachment 3. Pocket Park Nomination Descriptions

- Attachment 3a. Additional Information Received After the April 15, 2005, Nomination Deadline
- Attachment 4. Map of Proposed Sites
- Attachment 5. Areas Served by Open Space Map
- Attachment 6. Existing Pocket Park Map

STAFF:

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**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
POCKET PARK PROGRAM
(Approved on March 12, 2005)**

The purpose of the Pocket Park Program is to enhance and expand the existing City of Alexandria public park system by ensuring a network of small scale park spaces designed to meet neighborhood needs. The concept of the "pocket park," also called "block park," also called "vest pocket park," has been incorporated in many jurisdictions' park programs as a way to create and provide additional community amenities in both residential and commercial areas. Specific parks range in their function from wild, woodland settings, to tot lots and man-made, urban environments.

1. *Pocket parks defined*

Council approved the Committee recommendation that the City define a pocket park as follows:

Pocket (block) parks are intended to meet the needs of residents or workers within about a tenth of a mile. Pocket parks are less than 20,000 square feet, with no minimum size. No parking is needed. Pocket parks may include such elements as small scale play equipment, public gardens, seating areas, passive open space, landscaped areas, important natural features, or trees.

The definition includes several important concepts. One aspect is that a pocket park is intended to be public. While limited in its defined service area, and ideally supported by volunteer citizen efforts, a pocket park is part of the City's official public park system. The tenth of a mile (528 ft.) service area is the current standard used by the City and is consistent with the one to two block dimension used in the Open Space Plan. The importance of the service area is to distinguish Pocket Park space from larger parks that serve an entire neighborhood or region of the City, or a City-wide parks that serves all of Alexandria.

The size of a pocket park is part of its definition. The fact that there is no minimum size is important, allowing very small spaces to be eligible. While there is no minimum size, it is also important that the space be small, less than 20,000 square feet of land area. Larger spaces begin to serve a larger population and other park needs. Parking is not part of the typical pocket park, because the park is designed to serve pedestrians able to walk the tenth of a mile or one to two block distance.

The definition includes uses anticipated in a typical pocket park, but has been written specifically so as not to exclude the occasional unusual situation. Most pocket parks may be passive spaces within residential or commercial areas, used for contemplation, relaxation, and walking, with landscaping and benches. The definition leaves open the possibility for other opportunities, however, in the appropriate setting.

In drafting the definition, the Committee reviewed the City's existing 24 pocket parks. The Committee also reviewed the two following maps (Attachments 1b&c), identifying pocket parks in the context of the City park system:

1. The "**Existing Pocket Park**" map shows existing pocket parks as well as other public parks in the City. It also shows, as to each, the 1/10th mile service area surrounding the parks. Finally, the density data from the 2000 census is shown on the same map, allowing an analysis of park location and population (Attachment 1c).

2. The "**Areas of the City Served by Open Space including Pocket Parks**" map shows pocket parks, other public parks, and other open spaces, both public and private, including private areas with and without public access. Again, the 1/10th mile service radius is highlighted, thus allowing a determination of the areas of the City for which no land is easily available for relief. The map answers comments from City Council and others about private amenities in apartment complexes, at schools, and in other forms that serves some of the population, even if public access is not permitted (Attachment 1b).

Existing parks and playground area are not part of and are not affected by the pocket park program. Those parks are managed, maintained and funded by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, as part of its ongoing parks program. The pocket park program as proposed here is new, and designed to add land to the City park system. There may be improvements to existing parks that are desired by a neighborhood, but they should not be confused with nominations and discussions about proposed pocket parks. For example, if there is a desire for a tot lot on an existing public park, that recommendation should not be part of the pocket park analysis and prioritization. The suggestion would be directed to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities for consideration as part of its ongoing work.

2. *Criteria*

The criteria for judging potential pocket parks and prioritizing them is attached and includes the following elements: (Attachment 1a)

a. *Public benefit.* The recommended criteria focuses on the benefits to be derived from the use of the land as a park, citing as significant natural or historic features, the extent of the population to be served, and the fact that the users have no current alternative park land. This criterion requires that the City identify the public benefit or public value to be achieved by creating the pocket park.

b. *Use.* The criteria require that the proposed use of the park be identified and considered as part of the prioritization process. The criteria further stress the importance of the park being open and inviting to the public. The City should not support land for a pocket park if it is hidden,

hard to access and otherwise perceived as a private space only for use by its immediate neighbors.

c. *Neighborhood commitment.* Another important element in a potential pocket park is the degree to which the neighborhood is committed to its creation, and specifically with its acquisition, development and/or maintenance of the park. Because pocket parks are uniquely local in nature, and given the competition for resources, it is appropriate that those benefitting from this particular type of park show their commitment to it with their time, money and energy. While a neighborhood commitment and volunteer effort is only one of several criteria, the Committee believes strongly that pocket parks are particularly suited to a local effort to assist with the acquisition, development and/or maintenance of the park.

d. *Land status.* The criteria also include a review of the land itself, and a determination that it is appropriate for a pocket park. First, if the land is public, it may be capable of being converted to a pocket park use, but would not be a competitor for the prioritization for pocket park acquisition money. In addition, there may be alternatives to acquisition of private land that are appropriate for a pocket park. One landowner has already suggested that his vacant commercial property be leased by the City for at least ten years for use as a park while he foregoes development during that time. The City endorses creative means of establishing parks and includes a criterion to identify the status of the land being proposed. The cost or price of the land is not included as part of the criteria, because, as discussed previously with City Council, that issue is the province of City Council.

e. *Support for the park.* It is important that any pocket park recommended by the Committee to Council be one that has a broad base of support. The criteria therefore asks that the support for the park or its proposed use be identified, and if there is known opposition to it, that be identified as well.

f. *Geographical need.* Finally, it is important to provide parks in areas of the City that currently lack such amenities. The attached maps shows that there is currently service with some sort of park use for much of the City. Where park service is lacking, that fact should be part of the consideration in prioritizing new park opportunities. At the same time, there may also be good reasons for establishing a pocket park in an area of the City that already is theoretically served by other parks, where there is an agreed upon use, readily available land, and assistance with the acquisition costs. Thus, the notion of geographical need is included in the criteria, but is not the only determinative issue.

3. *Funding*

Council has approved the idea of setting aside an amount of money in each year's budget for pocket park acquisition, roughly equivalent to 20% of the 1 cent tax set aside for open space acquisition. Additional funds for the design and development of the parks must be made part of

the City's Capital Improvement Program, and maintenance funds, as part of the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities' budget, must be part of the City's operating budget.

To expand the ability to place pocket parks across the City, neighborhood "friends" groups should be supported, to assume the routine maintenance of these parks. Also, other mechanisms for cost sharing should be considered to acquire the parcels for these pocket parks, including contributions, easements, development exactions, city land swaps and use of the Development Fund. As a recent example, in both the Hennage and Postmasters development projects, pocket parks were included and helped create successful private development partnerships.

4. *Process*

The process for pocket parks is similar to but separate from the one the City has been using for priority open space sites. The Open Space Committee creates a separate list of Pocket Park priorities for City Manager consideration. The list will include ranked recommendations selected from nominations received from neighborhood groups, as well as additional nominations for areas of the City without nominations. In 2005, the Committee anticipated that pocket park nominations would be filed by March 30, and recommendations made to City Council, along with the Open Space Priority list for 2005, in June 2005¹.

The Committee will be making a recommendation to City Council regarding the nature and structure of a group to manage the open space efforts on a long term basis, which may be a mechanism similar to the Open Space Committee. As part of that recommendation, the Committee will address a specific mechanism for processing pocket park recommendations in the future.

It is important to note that with annual recommendations for open space priority sites as well as pocket parks, there will inevitably be out of cycle park and open space land proposals. If and when those occur, the Committee will not hesitate to forward its recommendations to the City Manager for consideration. The committee also intends to continue its outreach effort regarding the benefits of open space generally, and the specific rewards of donating land, easements and other interests for use as parks and open space.

¹Note: The timeline was changed based on City Council approval of the Pocket Park Program in March, 2005.

CRITERIA FOR POCKET PARKS SELECTION
(not listed in order of importance)

1. What is the benefit to the public from the proposed pocket park?
 - a. Are there important natural features, such as trees, water resources or habitat, to be preserved?
 - b. Are there important historic resources to be featured or preserved?
 - c. Will the park provide uses for a population without alternative sites?
 - d. How wide an area will be served by the park? Will it be used by more than just a few neighbors?
2. What is the proposed use of the park? Will the park be perceived as open and inviting to the general public? Will the park be compatible with surrounding uses?
3. To what extent has the neighborhood demonstrated a commitment to assist with funding or other contributions to the park?
 - a. initial acquisition
 - b. development, including equipment, furniture, plantings and “sweat equity.”
 - c. long term maintenance
 - d. is a Friends of the Park organization proposed?
4. How available is the land for the park? (Without considering cost *per se*)
 - a. Is it already in public ownership?
 - b. If not in public ownership, is the owner willing to sell it?
 - c. If not for sale, is the owner willing to donate it, grant a permanent easement on it, or lease it to the city? Will the park be available in perpetuity and, if not, how practical will it be to convert the park use to private use at the end of that time.
** Approved Pocket Park Criteria #4 was not used in the scoring for these sites as all of the nominated properties are privately owned at this time, and criteria (4b) and (4c) will be pursued in the next phase of this program.*
5. To what degree does the nomination reflect broad support from the neighborhood to acquire and develop the park, and is there agreement about the specific type of use? Is there a known dissenting view?
6. Is there a need for a pocket park or additional pocket parks in the geographical area of the city where the proposed site is located?

Ranked List of Pocket Park Nominations

Pocket Park Nominations - 2005 Ranked List (15 possible points)¹

Nominated Site	Total Score	Square Feet	2005 Assessed Value
2309 Mount Vernon Avenue	15	2,958	\$ 265,100
1 & 7 East Del Ray Avenue	15	14,888	224,100
301 La Verne Avenue	14	4,200	31,400
11 Quaker and 3327 Duke Street	13	15,011	131,600
707 Russell Road	12	5,614	275,900
2207 Mount Vernon Avenue	12	8,663	227,600
4214 Duke Street	11	57,130	1,135,300
724-728 North Patrick Street	11	10,200	444,500
805, 809, 811 North Columbus Street	11	16,897	928,600
150 South Gordon Street	10	72,537	2,563,300
901 North Saint Asaph Street	10	56,319	7,121,000
1023 Duke Street	8	2,743	279,000
209 Pine Street	7	18,118	760,300
101-103 West Mount Ida Avenue	6	8,000	98,900
30 Rosecrest Avenue	6	8,031	285,100
106 East Nelson Avenue	6	10,800	982,600
3500 Mount Vernon Avenue	5	13,880	525,900
3041, 3107, 3111 Mount Vernon Avenue	5	6,600	168,400
3540 Commonwealth Avenue	5	7,910	179,400

¹2004 pocket park nominations not ranked

**Pocket Park Nomination Descriptions
2005 Nominations**

101-103 Mount Ida Avenue: The site consists of two adjoining properties, both 4,000 square feet, at the corner of Hickory Street and West Mount Ida Avenue. The site is currently vacant and flat with some overgrowth. The nomination indicates that the site is located along a major pedestrian route connecting Russell Road and Commonwealth Avenue and would be an ideal corner location for a tot lot and/or benches and trash cans. It was also indicated that any users would be able to walk to the park, and no parking would be required.

Staff Analysis: The property is currently owned by the adjacent property owner on Mt. Ida Avenue. The site was also nominated by the Del Ray Civic Association and identified in the 2004 Open Space Report. With significant community support, the City could consider purchasing one or both of the parcels and/or right of first refusal.

301 La Verne Avenue: The 4,200 square foot site is a substandard corner lot located at the corner of La Verne Avenue and Turner Road and is currently undeveloped. Applications for special use permits to improve the lot have not been successful to date. The current owner is continuing to pursue development of the site and the community nominations note that immediate action may be necessary to preserve it as open space. It is noted that the site is located near existing trails.

The immediate neighbors within two blocks of the site have been interested for years in creating a park in this location, and most signed a petition attached to their pocket park nomination. The nominator indicated that the group are all long-term homeowners. All the neighbors she has spoken with, and who signed the petition, agreed that they would be active in developing and maintaining the park, including planting, mowing and fundraising for amenities. Existing trees provide necessary shade and reduce the need for purchasing and planting new trees. In the past two months, since Planning Commission denial, the site appears to have turned into a storage lot for the owners. Recently there has been digging and ground disturbance exposing the roots of the trees on the site (documented with photos by a neighbor). The nominator indicates that the location is ideal at the "T" intersection and sees significant foot traffic, including strollers and dog walkers. Though there is another park in fairly close proximity, it is used for a playground. This park would provide a more passive, quiet use for the neighbors (no one living in the immediate vicinity has young children).

Staff Analysis: The property owners have recently submitted another development proposal requiring special use permit approval to develop the property with a single-family house. The site is near the Mount Jefferson Park and Greenway with no other parks in the immediate vicinity. Nominations for this site were made by two groups of neighboring residents with a total of 17 petition signatures (for open space preservation). One group of residents (long-term home

owners in the nearby vicinity have indicated that they would be committed to a schedule of land maintenance, including: mowing, light gardening, weeding and trash pick-up.

707 Russell Road: The 5,614 square foot site is at the corner of West Masonic View Avenue and Russell Road and is currently vacant with a number of mature trees. The nomination indicates a need for a park along Russell Road to counteract the busy thoroughfare that the street has become. A small park with benches or a community garden park for children is proposed.

The nominator indicated that while the site is fairly close in proximity to Beach Park, the use proposed is different (more passive) and Beach Park cannot be seen or directly accessed from Russell Road. A nearby bus stop and significant foot traffic make this an ideal location for a pocket park. Rosemont Garden Club has a proven track record and would be active in developing and maintaining this space. There are a number of trees on the site, so new trees wouldn't be required. The Rosemont Civic Association and/or Garden Club has indicated that it would consider doing a fundraiser for benches and any other amenities, and would also consider a "Friends of...Park."

Staff Analysis: The site is currently privately owned by a trustee of the original owner and no recent activity is noted in City records. Maury Elementary School with Beach Park to the rear is immediately across the street, so the area is currently served with open space/parks. The site was nominated with unanimous support by the Rosemont Civic Association Executive Board.

1 & 7 East Del Ray Avenue (*Also nominated in 2004): The two adjoining properties, 8,625 and 6,263 square feet, are located on the corner of East Del Ray and Commonwealth Avenue and are currently vacant and are zoned residential. The parcel on the corner was used for a non-conforming furniture repair shop prior to being demolished. The second parcel is used for a private vegetable garden. The nomination indicates that the site is ideally located along Commonwealth with many advantages for community use as it connects to the Commonwealth Avenue median open space and many nearby residents can walk to it. A tot-lot and/or community gathering area is proposed. One individual nominator has volunteered contribution of a six foot Japanese Maple as well as time and effort for maintenance.

Response from the community (three individuals sent a response) demonstrates support for the park from the immediate neighbors. The site is already occasionally used as a park by people passing by and is a ideal due to its location at an intersection. The community would like to see a passive use park (no tot lot) with low-maintenance plantings with less grass. They state that the site would require very little other than clean-up for conversion, and indicated an interest in assisting with and contributing some landscaping. They also indicated that they would assist with maintenance. The corner of East Del Ray and Commonwealth has significant foot traffic, and there are no other nearby parks of this nature and with a passive use. It would also be attractive to the many people who drive by on a regular basis. Respondents believe that the owner does not wish to see the site developed with a building. Currently the lots are not maintained by the owner, but the next door neighbor helps out. A group of residents plan to speak to the owner regarding intentions for the site and possible acquisition. The neighbors have been in contact with the Master Gardener's Program. Though no commitment has been made, there seems to be interest. They are also interested in a "Friend's of...Park."

Staff Analysis: The site (two properties) is privately owned. The site is currently not served (within 1/10 mile) by any other parks. The properties were also nominated by the Del Ray Civic Association and identified in the 2004 Open Space Report. With significant community support, the City could consider purchasing one or both of the parcels and/or right of first refusal.

2207 Mount Vernon Avenue (*Also nominated in 2004): The vacant property is located on the east side of Mount Vernon Avenue between Custis and East Del Ray Avenues. It is bordered by commercially zoned and used properties. The nomination indicates that the site is flat and prominently visible by Mount Vernon Avenue street traffic, making it an ideal site for a small village square. In the past it has been used as a gathering space for Art on the Avenue and other special events, though it was recently fenced off.

Staff Analysis: The property is currently owned by a nearby owner of other commercial properties on the street and is nearby to a number of community businesses with heavy local foot traffic, including St. Elmo's Coffee and the Del Ray Dreamery. The site sits inside the 1/10 mile area served by parks and within five blocks of the Mount Vernon Community School and Recreation Center. The property was also nominated by the Del Ray Civic Association and identified in the 2004 Open Space Report. With significant community support, the City could consider purchasing the parcel and/or right of first refusal.

1023 Duke Street (Lease only): The 2,743 square foot site is located at the corner of South Henry and Duke Streets and is currently vacant. The owner, also the nominator for this property, is interested in leasing the site to the City for 5-10 years for use as a pocket park with the potential to build on it after that time. The property and surrounding properties are zoned commercially and used mainly for commercial purposes.

The owner of the site indicated continued interest in leasing the site to the City for 5-8 years with the intention of potential development in the future. He is unsure of community support for a pocket park at this location, but is going to contact the Old Town Civic Association and Eakin Youngentaub development across the street to assess their interest. He did not indicate that he was interested in contributing to the park development beyond establishing the lease.

Staff Analysis: The site is currently owned by Frank Fannon, who has indicated interest in leasing the property to the City for temporary use as a pocket park. It is currently used for parking. The location is not presently served by any parks within 1/10 of a mile and is the only site nominated in the southern part of Old Town. The nomination was made by an individual (the owner), with no community support or objections documented.

30 Rosecrest Avenue (*Also nominated in 2004): The vacant 8,031 square foot site is located at the corner of Russell Road and Rosecrest Avenue. It is relatively flat with no trees, and is visible due to its corner location. It is surrounded by existing residential development. The

property is currently signed: "No Ball Playing." The nomination indicates that the site would be an ideal area for a park with benches and trees or for a tot-lot.

Staff Analysis: The site is currently owned by a housing developer, and the size of the site would meet the current zoning requirements for development of a single family home, but there has been no recent activity documented development request. The property was also nominated by the Del Ray Civic Association and identified in the 2004 Open Space Report. With significant community support, the City could consider purchasing the parcel and/or right of first refusal.

106 East Nelson Avenue: The 10,800 square foot site is located on East Nelson Avenue, close to the corner of Wayne Street. It is currently developed with a single family home, zoned R-2-5. The nomination indicates that the parcel would provide visual relief and opportunity for passive recreation and/or playgrounds. The nominator indicated that there are no other parks in the immediate vicinity and this site is in a very "walkable" location with some trees. It could be used as a break in the block for neighborhood gatherings.

Staff Analysis: The site is currently owned and used for a single family home and the rear yard of the lot is not suited for any development, nor would it be accessible to the public. This nomination was from an individual with no community support indicated.

3500 Mount Vernon Avenue (at West Glebe): The 13,880 square foot site is located at the corner of Mount Vernon Avenue and West Glebe Road, zoned CDD#12. A financial institution and associated parking lot are currently housed on the property. The nomination indicates that the parcel would provide visual relief and opportunity for passive recreation and/or playgrounds. The nominator indicated that she attempt to get support from the community. She believes the Tenant and Workers Support Committee would support a park in this location. Specific comments include:

- The parking lot radiates heat in the summer with no relief and would better serve the community as a park with benches and perhaps a fountain.
- While it is close to Four Mile Run Park, there is little park relief in the immediate vicinity - all paved areas.
- The Tenant and Workers Support Committee does not think the site should be used as a parking lot.
- It could also serve as a park for Presidential Greens residents.

Staff Analysis: The site is currently operated as a local business institution and the owner has not indicated plans to sell. This nomination was from an individual with no community support indicated. The Arlandria Plan approved by Council contemplates a mixed use development on this and adjacent sites.

11 Quaker and 3327 Duke Street (moved from general open space priority list): The vacant site (two properties) is located on the corner of Duke Street and North Quaker Lane. Combined,

the size of the property is 15,011 square feet. The original nomination included the lot owned by the Church for required parking. This third lot was removed from consideration and due to the new size of less than 20,000 square feet, this property was moved from the general open space list. The nomination indicates that a pocket park would be used by the Seminary Hill and adjacent neighborhoods. It also states that this park would offer visual relief, could be walked to by many and is historically significant in commemoration of the history and significance of the development of the City. Historic facts/education could be incorporated into the park. It could also be used as an educational lab related to ecology and environmental balance. The nominating group strongly supports the acquisition of this site for a pocket park and has a number of ideas on how they could participate in maintenance and development. Also see additional information (Attachment 3a) received after deadline from the Seminary Hills Civic Association.

Staff Analysis: The site is currently owned by the owners of the adjacent property and has an approved site plan for development of an office building. Recently a proposal by the owner for a residential/townhouse development was denied by the Planning Commission. The owner could build the office building "by right," and has continued to express interest in further development of the site. The nomination came in from the Seminary Hills Homeowners' Association, but because it did not come in as a pocket park proposal, there is no indication of potential community involvement/commitment. The City could consider acquisition of right of first refusal, though current activity suggests this may not be acceptable to the site owner.

209 Pine Street (at Russell Road): The parcel contains a single family residence on the corner of Pine Street and Russell Road on an 18,118 square foot lot. The zoning is R-8 and the lot is larger than the required 8,000 square feet. The portion fronting Russell Road is vacant with mature oaks, American Holly, dogwood and miscellaneous other mature trees. The proposal indicates that the site would need little if any improvements and that maintenance could be provided by the nominator and other neighbors and would provide the surrounding community (Del Ray, North Ridge and Jefferson Park) with valuable open space, and being on Russell Rd. would also provide visual open space for all those that use it. The nominator believes that continued infill along Russell Rd. make this parcel a prized open space that could be lost to future development if not preserved now (the identical adjacent site was developed in 1999). The nominator intends to approach the immediate neighbors of the site, who have indicated support for a pocket park in this location to assess what and how they would contribute to development and maintenance. He personally is interested in assisting with both. There are two large trees on the site that could be preserved.

Staff Analysis: The site is currently privately owned by the owner and resident of the single family home. There are no current plans that show the owner intends to develop/subdivide the parcel, though it is possible under current zoning. The City would have to subdivide the lot for formal pocket park status. This could be a potential site for an open space easement. The nomination came in from an individual just before the deadline who believes he could obtain community support.

901 North Saint Asaph Street (ABC site): The property is the block bounded by First Street, North Pitt Street and North Saint Asaph Street. Half of the property contains a Giant Grocery store used by the neighborhood, the other half contains an ABC liquor store with a large parking lot. The nomination indicates that this lot is typically empty/unused. It is proposed that the ABC be relocated and then the City should build a pocket park comprising a garden, trees and other public amenities for a community gathering space.

Staff Analysis: While the entire site is 56,319 square feet, larger than the maximum pocket park size, the nomination indicates that only the portion used for the ABC should be converted to park, while the Giant should remain for community use. Development proposals have been submitted to the City for concept review. The nomination came in from an individual with no other community support identified. The State is currently marketing this property for \$12.0 million.

3041, 3107, 3111 Mount Vernon Ave. (Triangle Site - old gas station, Mandarin Inn parking): The nomination supports using the northern portion of the properties identified in the new Mount Vernon Avenue Area Plan as the "Triangle Site" adjacent to Vernon Square Offices. A strip of land along the north portion of at least three of the current parcels could be used to link up with the trails located on the former W&OD to the southeast across Commonwealth Avenue and to the northeast through the Virginia American Water Co. property to the current Glebe Rd. Railbed site. The proposal indicates a benefit to Potomac West residents as well as the City at large, especially those that will occupy the Potomac Yard area. The proposal also indicates interest in the City Adopt-a-Park program.

Staff Analysis: The Triangle Site is clearly denoted and planned for redevelopment in the Mount Vernon Avenue Area Plan. The eleven parcels in this area are currently underutilized and offer significant opportunity for redevelopment. The Plan recommends the coordinated redevelopment of these parcels, with a potential increase in floor area ratio, consistent with defined development standards for a quality multi-family development with publicly visible and usable open space. Using the north section of these parcels was not considered in the Plan's approval. The nomination came in from an individual just before the deadline who believes he could obtain support from the Del Ray Civic Association if necessary.

2004 Nominations

The following sites as potential pocket park sites. Only portions of those sites that are larger than 20,000 square feet are included.

2311 Mount Vernon Avenue: The approximately 7,105 square foot site, also known as the Mt. Vernon/Del Ray Community Gathering Place and nominated by the Del Ray Civic Association, is the parcel next to the city parking lot at the southeast corner of East Oxford and Mt. Vernon (2309 Mt. Vernon). There are no significant natural features, but it is in a good central location and is next to the Del Ray Farmers Market. One dwelling built in 1920 covers about half the lot with an insurance agency office.

724-728 North Patrick Street - Inner City Urban Park: The site is located on North Patrick Street at the southwest corner with Madison Street and is across from the Charles Houston Recreation Center. 724 and 726 Patrick total 6,600 square feet and are vacant. 728 Patrick is 3649 square feet with a building. Combined area is 10,200 square feet. The site is in close proximity to the Recreation Center, but is separated from the Center by heavily used Route 1. Visits would be by bike or foot. A park could provide urban relief in a densely populated area. The Charles Houston Recreation Center property has limited space and the building will soon be undergoing renovation.

805, 809, 811 North Columbus Street (Nominated in 2004 and added to the Pocket Park nominations by the OSSC in 2005): This site is located at the northeast corner of North Columbus and Madison Streets and is part of the Beulah Baptist Church property. The three vacant lots at this site total 16,897 square feet. The site was nominated in 2004 and added to the 2005 Pocket Park nominations list at the end of the review process by the OSSC. Due to the similarities of the sites, this property was then determined to be equal in ranking to the Inner City Urban Park site on North Patrick Street.

150 South Gordon: A portion of this site, located on the corner of South Gordon and Wheeler Avenue, appearing as the triangle of open space at the rear of the property was nominated. The entire site is 72,537 square feet and the maximum pocket park is 20,000 square feet. Staff noted that this is part of a commercial site that provides a buffer area for the neighborhood. Additional community support information was not received for the nomination, but it appears the neighborhood would like to insure that the buffer is maintained. The site is nearby to the 4214 Duke Street parcel and in an area well served by open space and recreation facilities.

4214 Duke Street: The parking lot portion of this site, located at the corner of Duke and South Gordon Streets, was nominated. The site is a commercial site owned by VDOT (Commonwealth of Virginia) and is a total of 57,130 square feet. Additional community support information was not received for the nomination, but as with the 150 South Gordon site, a buffer along Duke Street and South Gordon Street would be provided.

3540 Commonwealth Avenue: The site was mentioned in the 2004 Open Space Priority Report as an additional opportunity. Because it is 7,910 square feet, the OSSC recommended that it be considered as a pocket park in 2005. No additional community support information as received regarding this property. It is located nearby to the Cora Kelly School and is in an area well served by parks.

11 Quaker Lane and 3327 Duke Street - Quaker View

**Expression of Community Support for Proposed Pedestrian Park
at North Quaker Lane and Duke Street (Northeast Corner) (“Quaker View”)**

TO: The Mayor and Members of the City Council of Alexandria, Virginia and Other Interested Parties
c/o Mr. Kirk Kincannon, Director, Department of Recreation Parks and Cultural Architects of the City of Alexandria

FROM: The Quaker View Park Stakeholder’s Committee (as listed below)
c/o Richard R. G. Hobson, Esquire
rhobson@mcguirewoods.com

DATE: July 29, 2005

The following organizations, entities, individuals and residents located within the vicinity of the proposed Quaker View Park present the following elements of support for the proposed Quaker View Park, as a pedestrian-oriented public park, in the event that it is purchased and operated by the City of Alexandria.

I. **Functional Goals for the Park**

A. **History**

The Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (“SHA”) is currently documenting historic buildings and history of the SHA membership area with funds from the Historic Alexandria

Foundation and the City of Alexandria. Research will include specific documentation of historic information relevant to the Quaker View Park – specifically in the following areas:

1. History of Little River Turnpike

Documentation of the major contribution that the Little River Turnpike (now Virginia State Route 236 and U.S. Route 50) made in the economic development of the port of Alexandria and (as one of the first toll roads) its agricultural hinterland. In addition to its economic contribution, this early transportation capital improvement served as a cultural and social link between Alexandria and the agricultural resources and rural residents as far west as Aldie, Virginia and by means of Alexandria's access to the sea, with other colonies and states of the Atlantic Seaboard and foreign ports.

2. Civil War Heritage – In addition, the foregoing historic research and investigation will document the Civil War era role that nearby fortifications and residences played in the approach, conduct and aftermath of the Civil War. This will include the history of an early pre-civil war school (the "Fairfax School") conducted at "CLARENS", a building still standing, on Quaker Lane and which was a school attended by Custis Lee and George Mifflin Dallas, among other notables. Fort Williams, an integral part of the federal defenses in Washington and Alexandria was located nearby at the crest of the Quaker Lane hill. The Civil War research will describe the role played by General Ashley Cooper, whose farm and residence adjoins the park. General Cooper was the senior Confederate military advisor to President Jefferson Davis throughout the war and retired thereafter to his nearby home on Quaker Lane. He was a friend of

General Robert E. Lee, who as a benefactor was responsible for construction of a post-war residence on the property for General Cooper.

The objective of the research and documentation would be to communicate the historic background of this particular community by appropriate interpretive and educational panels in the Park so that current residents and pedestrians will be informed of this local history. This research will also be integrated into teaching modules which support the Virginia's Standards of Learning initiative in history.

B. Educational and Natural Science Contribution

The landscape design plan is based on the premise that the park will serve as a learning resource for students and adults. Every effort will be made to integrate relevant History, English and Natural Resource Standards of Learning objectives to each component of the park.

1. Planting of native plants and shrubs with identity and description of their presence in the history of Virginia and the local environment.
2. Sponsorship of educational events with the Alexandria Public Schools.

C. Beautification of Duke Street

1. The Park would provide an oasis of green in a heavily traveled urban corridor. Bushes, trees and shrubs would contribute a welcome contrast to concrete, asphalt, multiple lane traffic medians and street lights with heavy truck and automobile traffic. Recent efforts have upgraded some commercial properties and under grounding of utilities has improved the streetscape but there is little greenery and no open space for restful contemplation.

D. Creation of an Opportunity for Spectators for Skate Park and Baseball Field Activity

1. The recent development of the skate park has substantially increased the recreational use of the site immediately across Duke Street from, and at a lower elevation than the Park site. Proper siting of benches would permit parents and visitors to the park to view and monitor activities at both the skate park and baseball field.

E. Encouragement and Enhancement of Pedestrian Use of Duke Street and Quaker Lane

1. There is already considerable pedestrian traffic along Duke Street and on Quaker Lane, including customers patronizing Alexandria Commons, particularly the Giant Food Store as well as other commercial use in the Commons and other retail uses on the south side of Duke Street. Encouragement and enhancement of such pedestrian use will both lessen competition for parking spaces, reduce local automobile traffic and exhaust emissions, and create an opportunity for pedestrians to break their journey from Alexandria Commons to residential development to the west along Duke Street. This Park will afford some opportunity for a pleasurable experience with children or pets and would help to build a sense of community in the area.

II. Potential Sponsor/Endorsers

A. Listed below are current and potential sponsors and supporters of the Park by specific categories of interest.

B. Overall Planning and Support

The following organizations and individuals have formed the initial Stakeholder's Committee to promote planning, and land acquisition and coordinate the various tasks that are part of the design, implementation and ongoing management of the Park.

Current participating members of the Stakeholder's Committee are:

Seminary Hill Association, Inc. – Representatives and Board Members:

Cynthia Gurne (telephone number: 703-461-9227) and
Dick Hobson (telephone number: 703-712-5437)

Quaker Village Homeowners Association:

Suzanne Scoville, President and
Diana T. Cangelosi, Representative

New Apostolic Church of North America, Inc. – Howard W. Miller, Pastor

Clover-College Park Civic Association – James Butler, Representative, Board Member
and Ginny Perry, Representative

Quaker Professional Square Condominium – Jennie Trapasso, Representative

Other Potential Stakeholders: JBG Rosenfeld Retail – Manager of Alexandria Commons, Quaker Hill Homeowners Association

Alexandria Public Schools – Wendy Sparrow, Coordinator of Habitat Gardens

B. Design and Maintenance

Once the property is acquired a team of experts in the field of engineering, landscape design and maintenance will be formed to begin the process of developing plans to convert the property into a park. In addition to experts, we will actively engage key stakeholders in the process. These stakeholders include k-12 students, businesses within walking distance of the park, public service departments and residents within walking distance of the park through their civic, homeowner, condo, property management or other representative group.

The following entities have offered an initial support of concept. It is anticipated that the Stakeholder's Committee will develop a plan that offers both financial and non-financial incentives to sponsors to encourage continuous support of the park.

Jim Luby, Manager of Hollywood and Vine and retired employee National Botanical Gardens, New Apostolic Church, Wendy Sparrow, Alexandria Public Schools and coordinator of habitat gardens.

III. Funding Sources

The Stakeholder's Committee has begun to address the issue of initial and continuous costs associated with the Quaker View Park initiative. We will pursue creating a non-profit foundation to facilitate a continuous funding option with incentives to support the educational and public purposes of the Park.

IV. Monitoring of Use of Park

The New Apostolic Church, Seminary Hill Association Inc. and Quaker Village Homeowners Association will appoint designated representatives who reside or work in the area in the immediate vicinity of the Park to monitor its use, report regularly to responsible City Staff and to help with maintenance.

V. Sharing of Litter control and Minor Maintenance Responsibilities

Seminary Hill Association will take the initiative in being a lead in participating in the City "Adopt a Park" program.

The foregoing is respectfully submitted:

The Quaker View Park Stakeholder's Committee

Quaker Village Homeowners Association

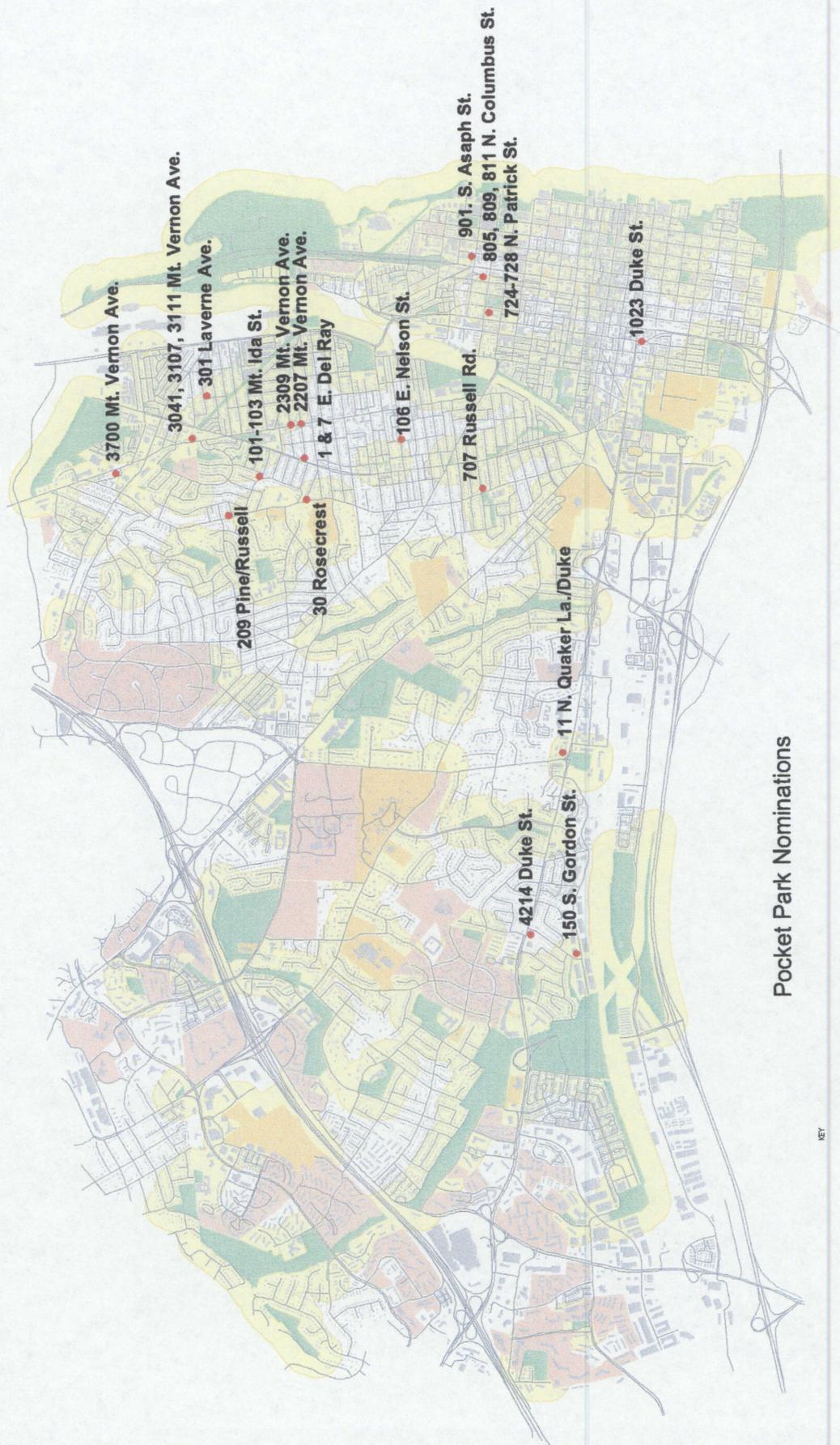
By: Suzanne Scoville
President

Seminary Hill Association, Inc.

By: Cynthia Gurne and Richard R. G. Hobson,
Representatives and Board Members

New Apostolic Church of North America, Inc.

By: Howard W. Miller
Pastor



Pocket Park Nominations

Not to Scale

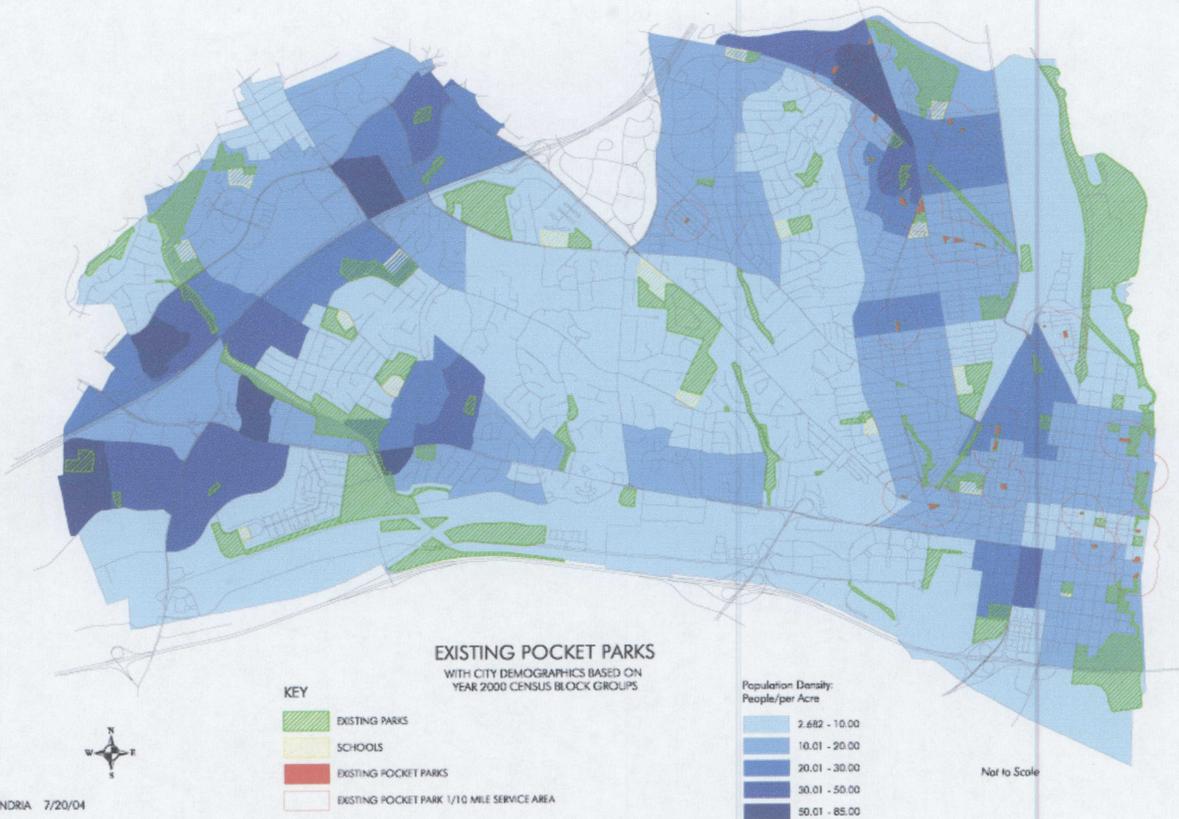
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
9/6/05

AREAS SERVED BY OPEN SPACE



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
11/10/04

EXISTING POCKET PARKS



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA 7/20/04

TRANSACTIONAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
UNDER STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFLICT OF INTERESTS ACT
for Members of Alexandria City Council
and of Other City Boards and Commissions and for
City Officers and Employees
Virginia Code § 2.2-3115(G)

1. Name: William D. Euille
2. Member of: City Council _____ (City Office or Department)

(Board or Commission)
3. Transaction: # 25 Docket/Agenda Item Sept. 13, 2005 Meeting Date

(Other)
4. Nature of Personal Interest Affected by Transaction: I own property at
106 East Nelson Avenue, and am a member of the group of owners of property
nominated for possible acquisition under the City's Pocket Park Program.

5. I declare, in light of my above-described personal interest in the identified Transaction (check one of the following):
- a. _____ That I am required to disqualify myself from participating in the Transaction.
- b. _____ That, although I am not required to disqualify myself, I have nonetheless elected to disqualify myself from participating in the Transaction.
- c. That I am a member of a business, a profession, an occupation or a group, all the members of which have a personal interest in the Transaction, and that I am able to participate in the Transaction fairly, objectively and in the public interest.

Sept. 13, 2005
Date


Signature