

Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council.

My name is Linda Couture, and I am here representing the Old Town Civic Association.

It is our understanding that the current waterfront planning process includes two consultants: the first to simply identify and talk with stakeholders and then presupposed to select the task force that will be vetted to work with the second consultant, a technical organization with actual waterfront planning in its bona fides.

It is also our understanding that the city's waterfront committee met with and asked you, Mayor Euille and members of council to be major participants. It is further our understanding that, as a result of these meetings, the city's waterfront committee is to be given the role of primary stakeholder.

This is not a proposal that the OTCA board of directors and I, chair of Old Town Civic Associations waterfront committee, can support.

The city's waterfront committee is the vested organization with a diverse membership representing many different interests within Alexandria: historic, parks, residents, businesses, etc.

To this end and given its mission, the city's waterfront committee should be the project manager that is in fact responsible for identifying and bringing into the process all stakeholders citywide.

In this way, all of the citizens, especially those most affected by any changes to the waterfront as a result of the plan can be assured that they have had a voice at the appropriate and early stages of planning, rather than feel constrained to voice their thoughts after a plan is designed and presented to the council.

*Dennis Cottrell*

*#2*

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*12-13-08*

SmartZone Communications Center Collaboration  
Suite

glenn\_eugster@comcast.net

medical problem

Saturday, December 13, 2008 6:12:40 AM

From: dsc1114@hotmail.com

To: glenn\_eugster@comcast.net

Attachments: Testimony.doc (31.3KB)

Hi Glenn,

I've been fighting what started out as a minor cold. Overnight, it turned into the kind of serious problem that I've had to deal with occasionally--a sore throat so messed up that I can hardly talk and, if I cough too much, I have breathing problems. I just called my doctor, who said to see him at 8:30 this morning and who will prescribe the one thing that gets me out of trouble--Biaxxin 500. I'm really disappointed that I won't be able to help you out with my testimony in person. Can you ask to submit my testimony or, better yet, get permission to read it for me to the Council? This note is my permission to do so. If anyone asks, just tell them that a medical emergency forced me to miss the hearing. I'm attaching my revised copy of the testimony again. I'll walk the material you loaned me down to your house at about 8 AM and leave it at your front door or give it to you directly. (It also contains a copy of my revised testimony.) Then I've got to head for my doctor.

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## **Statement before the Alexandria City Council**

### **On Fort Ward Park by Dennis S. Carroll**

**December 13, 2008**

My name is Dennis Carroll. My home at 4018 Ellicott Street is directly in back of Fort Ward Park's maintenance facility. I've visited the park for 30 years and bought my home near Fort Ward four years ago because I loved the park. Unfortunately, being close to the park has not been pleasant. From a ringside seat, I've discovered that the City has to balance the interests of homeowners near the park, the park's recreational users, and the park's preservation. In general, I think the City has failed to balance these interests.

The City deserves an F for its treatment of nearby homeowners until very recently. When I moved near the park, large trees belonging to the park leaned on and crushed my fence. It took a year of phone calls to get the city to remove the trees. By that time, the fence was wrecked and cost \$3,000 to replace. The city also stuck two large dumpsters about 25 feet from my fence. The dumpsters overflowed with trash and stunk so badly that my family could not enjoy our backyard. Strangers working for the city stood on top of the dumpsters to mash down the garbage. They could stare over the top of my fence into my back windows at my children. My protest got the city to wake up, remove the dumpsters, and work with me instead of against me. It took three years to reach this point of elementary competence and courtesy.

In balancing recreational uses with the concerns of homeowners, the City has again earned an F. My family has been annoyed repeatedly by the music of people partying for hours at a time. The thump--thump--thump of bass beats has reverberated across a thousand feet from near the amphitheater. I've visited the park

during these disco-style parties and seen hundreds of people centered on speakers six feet tall. The speakers are powered by SUVs or portable generators. Frankly, my wife and I felt intimidated by one gigantic party of a thousand people as well as by the litter, drinking, and a large tour bus parked and idling on park grass for several hours. Events on this scale and raucous music outrage residents as well as ruin the park in general.

The City has also earned an F for failing to preserve the park. The City needs to respect the park as the City's Arboretum and a source of history. Having visited the park for 30 years, I've come to regret the lack of young trees and progressive deterioration. The City needs to plant new trees and other vegetation to preserve the park's beauty. Parallel to the neglect of the Arboretum is the neglect of the history. Both of these values have suffered from a lack of balance in managing the park.

What can be done to balance the interests of homeowners, recreational users, and the park's preservation? One of the most important steps the city can take is a total prohibition of amplified music and alcohol by private parties. The city is considering such a prohibition and should implement it immediately. Why would this make a huge difference? Total prohibition of amplified music and alcohol would be easily understandable and enforceable. It would motivate big, noisy crowds to conduct their parties elsewhere. It would send a clear message to everybody that Fort Ward Park is NOT, repeat NOT, to be treated as a money-making discotheque. Instead, it would show the City's support for Fort Ward as a beautiful place where smaller groups can enjoy its beauty free of alcohol and raucous music while respecting the rights of nearby homeowners. Thank you for this chance to tell you my concerns.

Glenn Eugster  
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12-13-08

**Statement to the Alexandria, VA. City Council on Fort Ward Park  
by J. Glenn Eugster**

**December 13, 2008**

Good day. I'm J. Glenn Eugster of 4022 Ellicott Street, Alexandria, VA. My wife and I have lived in Alexandria for 20 years. We are here because of the history, sense of community, and the wonderful quality of life.

For the last 14 months I've been communicating with 55 homeowners in our neighborhood and others from nearby. I have sent you requests on their behalf asking for assistance. Each time that we have contacted you it was after a good-faith effort to resolve problems directly with the City Departments.

City park managers have routinely ignored, resisted, and actively worked against taxpayers who have expressed concerns about crime, garbage, flooding, noise, crowds, and cultural resource degradation. We have encountered passive aggressive and arrogant behavior in response to our concerns.

For example, when we experienced a variety of park-related crime in our area, park managers refused to close the gate to the park at night, removed the gate, and said, "Criminals will get in the park whether the gate is locked or not".

When we asked to move the solid waste transfer station in the park maintenance yard, I was told, "We are looking at an option to place the dumpsters behind your house".

When we complained about the expansion of the park maintenance yard to care for multiple parks, without a Special Use Permit or any public input, we were told, "The maintenance yard has always been there".

When we expressed concern to numerous City officials about the protection of Virginia Fitzhugh and the other African Americans buried in Fort Ward Park but outside the cemetery after the Civil War, we were totally ignored.

During the last two summers we complained regularly about the amplified noise levels and very large crowds without permits at the park. We were told, "Call the Police Department".

After trying for 8 months to secure a copy of the plan for Ft. Ward Park, we were told on November 7, 2008 that no plan exists. Recently we found a plan on the City's website dated October 16,

2008 that was prepared by City staff without public input. Not surprisingly, the plan doesn't address the concerns we have expressed nor does it have a goal. It has no objectives and does not even include all the areas of the park.

The residents of Marlboro Estates and other adjacent neighborhoods need your help. The Parks & Recreation Department intends to submit this flawed plan to the public at a hearing.

After over 30 years the park surely needs a plan. Park use and management have destroyed park resources, had a negative impact on adjacent homes, and contributed to health, safety and crime problems. As a remedy, we need a plan that is well-developed with input from experts and the public from the start rather than one that is presented to them at a hearing.

- Please make the City take adequate time to prepare a quality plan for Ft. Ward Park with expert and public input at the start.
- Remove the October 16, 2008 study and recommendations from the City's park planning website and call for a process that brings people together to develop a plan rather than have government carry out a preconceived proposal for people to react to.
- Encourage the Parks & Recreation Department to carry out their duties in ways that are more honest, open, and respectful of adjacent landowners.
- Request the Department to be more collaborative and committed to protecting park values while pursuing recreation services.

We won't get these ongoing problems solved, or achieve the economic, environmental, recreational, or educational potential of this part of our community unless the Council sets a better direction. We can't afford the current "we" versus "they" approach--it must be "us". We do our best work when we work together.

Help us please!

Thank you.

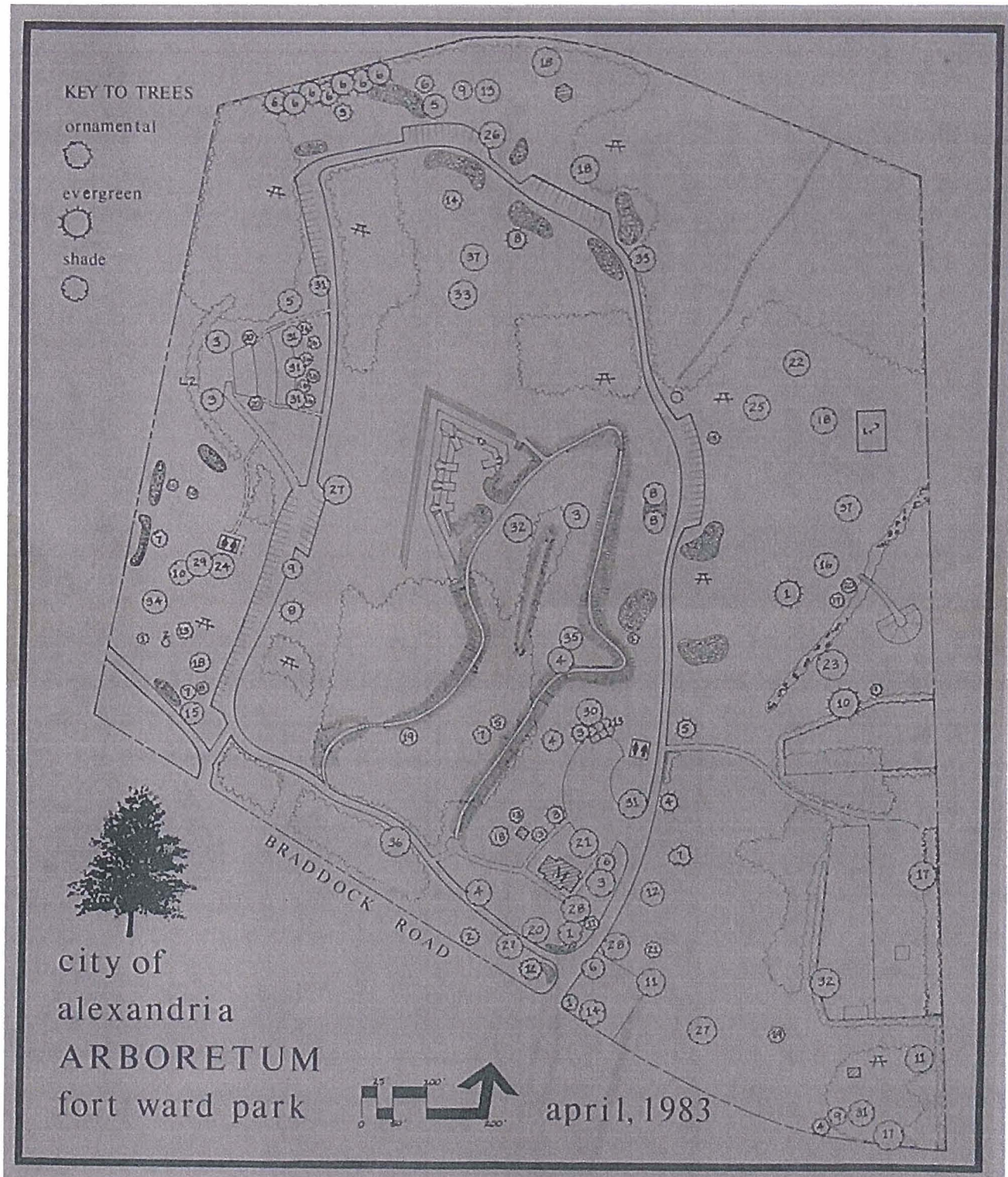
Nancy Jennings

#2

# Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park

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12-13-08



## Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park

### Incompatible Park Uses



Maintenance Yard creates problems with drainage, privacy, and noise.

Nursery is appointed better and has a lower impact.





## Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park

### Poor Drainage

Mainly from West Braddock Road  
and down to Van Dorn Street.



Maintenance yard and expanding roadways increase run off.



Pipes channel the water . . . debris, leaves, and trees block the flow . . .

## Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park

### Poor Drainage (cont)



... the catch basin at Van Dorn Street can be more of a swamp.

Also, water drains from West Braddock Road toward the soccer field.

## Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park

# Park Structures Degrade Historic Landmark

Such as the trash dumpster in the view shed of the Fort.



Gate house not in style of the yellow structures on the historic site.



## Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park Disrespect for Cemeteries



Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery borders the maintenance yard.



Another historic cemetery is outside the Oakland fence and in the park.

Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park  
Disrespect for Cemeteries (cont)



Several unprotected gravestones in the park have been knocked over by maintenance and recreation activities.



## Some Concerns about Ft. Ward Park

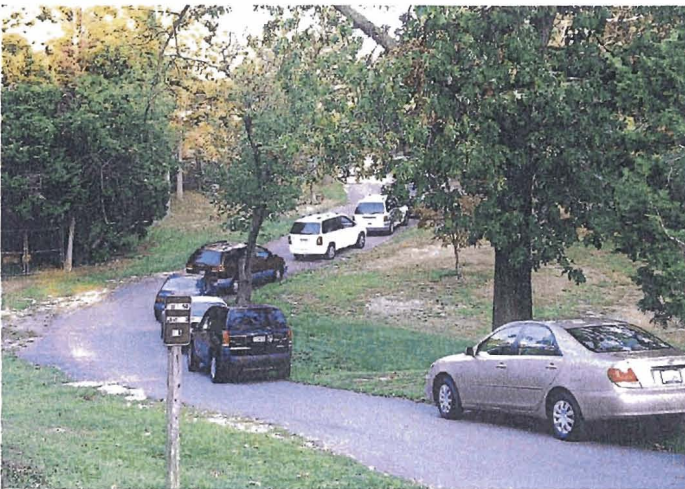
### Over Use and Abuse

Threatens not only the quality of life in the adjacent neighborhoods (during most summer weekends) but also the survival of the park.

A group of almost 1,000 partied on Labor Day in 2007 and 2008 . . .



. . . Cars and tour busses parked everywhere . . . amplified music blared for hours . . . City staff was left with beer bottles and an unusually large amount of trash.



The grass has yet to recover and drainage problems have been exacerbated.