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Sent: Wed Aug 15 14:11

To: menagerie7t@aol.com, adipeppe@aol.com, stevenpitze ...

Subject: Stafford Town Station and Crow's Nest

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the nearly 1,000 members of Save Crow's Nest. Our organization neither supports nor opposes the comprehensive plan amendment and rezoning application for Stafford Town Station. However, since many people have suggested this proposal is linked to saving Crow's Nest, we feel the need to clarify two points.

--First, a vote for this application is NOT a vote for saving Crow's Nest because the proffer involved is inadequate to the task.

--Second, this project is a bad deal for taxpayers. Let me elaborate.

On the first point, Proffer 4B regarding advance payment of cash proffers does not adequately address the need for the dedication of cash for the purchase of Crow's Nest.

--The proffer does not provide for a lump sum payment of \$25 million within one year of the approval of the rezoning, as originally proposed. It only provides for staggered payments, and only after approval of subdivision and construction plans, an arrangement that would hold the County hostage to approving those plans.

--The proffer does not designate that the cash payment be used specifically for the purpose of purchasing Crow's Nest. In fact, Crow's Nest is not mentioned anywhere in the proffer.

--The proffer states that the cash payment may be used "for any purpose consistent with the proffer guidelines in place at the time of rezoning." Our proffer guidelines do not include purchase of park lands that are not directly connected to a development project. The use of Stafford Town Station proffer dollars to purchase Crow's Nest could be litigated and found to be illegal.

--In summary, there are no guarantees that there will ever be any purchase of Crow's Nest, or conditions that this must occur within a certain time frame.

On the second point, this supposed plan to save Crow's Nest is simply a bad deal for taxpayers. Save Crow's Nest has always advocated a position of financial responsibility when it comes to saving Crow's Nest. We have never said "Crow's Nest at any price."

The Stafford Town Station proposal is a bad deal for taxpayers for several reasons.

--First, it allows the \$25 million in advance cash payments to be offset from the total proffer amount. That means there will be \$25 million less to pay for the roads, school and other services that will be needed by the nearly 1,800 households in this project. That's \$25 million that will have to come out of taxpayer pockets, one way or another. (By the way, that is \$25 million in addition to the millions in offsets to the cash payments that the applicant will receive for building an aquatic center.)

--Second, If the County exercises proffer 4B and elects to take the cash payments, the applicant will not have to make any additional cash proffers until the \$25 million cash advance has been taken, no matter how many building permits are issued. The structuring of the proffer in this way means that the applicant may in fact be able to take longer to make the cash payments than would otherwise happen. In essence, it provides free financing to the applicant, with taxpayers paying the price.

--Third, the project itself does not have enough commercial use to sustain the ongoing operating costs of the public services that will be needed by the nearly 1,800 households in the project. The property taxes from residential units, particularly townhomes and apartments which tend to have lower assessed values, are not enough to support the costs of public services needed by residents.

Supporters of the Stafford Town Station have said that the rezoning will make it possible to save Crow's Nest. But again, we want to make it perfectly clear that from our perspective that Stafford Town Station is a bad deal for Crow's Nest, and a bad deal for taxpayers. Whatever decisions you make about this project, do not try to justify them by citing Crow's Nest.

Ranjit Singh,
Save Crow's Nest