



## Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association

December 2, 2014

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Re: SP #231: Site Plan Amendment (2250 Clarendon Blvd, Medical/Dental Office Use)

Dear Members of the County Board:

I am writing on behalf of the Clarendon-Courthouse Civic Association (CCCA) regarding the proposed change to Site Plan #231 to make permanent the allowance for a dental office at a key retail location in Courthouse Plaza.

Acting on behalf of the CCCA because of our meeting schedule, the CCCA Executive Committee has voted to oppose this change. The CCCA believes and previous Staff and Board comments and actions have indicated that the Courthouse Plaza retail establishments should have the benefit of long-planned "anchor" retail at this location instead of a dental office.

Although the particular dentist in this office is no doubt excellent, from a planning perspective this placement of a dental office in this location has a long and controversial history. The CCCA has frequently in the past opposed extensions of the special and exceptional allowance for a dental office at this location, preferring a more active retail tenant that would help improve the overall retail environment at Courthouse Plaza.

When the County Board approved the location of the Courthouse Plaza hotel, it specifically interrupted the retail street wall along Clarendon Boulevard so as to provide visibility to this anchor tenant space. At the time, this design and planning decision was justified as an important component to attracting and drawing in pedestrian traffic off of Clarendon and into Courthouse Plaza. Part and parcel of this effort was the goal of placing "anchor" retail at the location of the current dentist office, which would provide the draw for pedestrians and signal the presence of retail activity inside the plaza.

At the time this was done, the dental office had only a few years left on its latest site plan extension as a "temporary" location until the Courthouse Plaza hotel site could be developed.

However, a new dentist shortly afterward took over the practice, and the County Board approved the most recent five-year extension. At that time, then County Manager Ron Carlee made public statements about the County's intention to eventually replace the dentist office with more active retail. The CCCA applauded and supported these statements, believing that a retail tenant in this anchor location is important to the success of other businesses located in the Courthouse Plaza and the overall goal of establishing a vibrant community environment.

We hope and expect that the County will abide by its prior policy objectives and public statements about creating a more vibrant Courthouse Plaza, and will reject the proposed site plan amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adam Thocher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Thocher  
President