

Good afternoon Ms. Parker,

I have taken me a little time to make myself fully informed and ready to the point where I weigh in on the Nelly Custis Park renovation. I appreciate the information provided to me by Mr. Aiken.

Recently, various members of the Aurora Highlands Civic Association (AHCA), including members of the Executive Board, have had discussions with the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff and the Director of Constituent Services about changes made to the design of Nelly Custis Park during the construction preparation phase after Civic Association approval of the design.

While we acknowledge that the County was within its rights to make the changes, we wish the County staff had been more proactive in communicating these changes to the community, however minor they were considered. In the future, we expect the County staff will reach out to the community when there are changes or updates to park projects that benefit from and rely on citizen participation for their successful execution. Our parks are not short of concerned citizens who wish to participate and contacting us will not cause delay.

To address the immediate concerns about the Nelly Custis project, we respectfully request that the County consider all possible alternatives (including but not limited to additional plantings that provide screening between existing residences and the new elements and relocating/repositioning the picnic bench to not directly face the residences) within the scope of the project to mitigate the aesthetic impact to the neighbors of the unexpected move of the west gate and the ramping and bench that was added associated Americans with Disability Act (ADA) elements. We would also request that County staff consult with the Civic Association on these or other potential solutions as soon as possible since park renovations are currently underway.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to successfully completing this project together.

Miriam Gennari
President Aurora Highland Civic Association
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