

Alexandria, VA 22306

April 23, 2021

Dan Storck
Supervisor, Mount Vernon District

Support for Kennedy Shelter Replacement at 2801 Beacon Hill Rd.

Dear Dan:

I write as a homeowner who lives a short distance from the site of the proposed collocation of the new Penn Daw fire station, replacement for the Kennedy Shelter, and supportive housing. I am fully in favor of the location, which is convenient to public transport and services.

The existence of people experiencing homelessness is a sad symptom of our times and of the inequitable systemic problems that provide less than living wages in a place where costs are high, keep people within one illness or lost paycheck of disaster, and squeeze out affordable housing.

I firmly believe that every person comes into the world as a trust of the whole. Those experiencing homelessness are already present the length of the route one corridor. A conveniently located modern facility offering shelter and services is an effective way to ensure that fellow citizens in need are offered opportunities to thrive. The main reason for homelessness is simple: not having a home. A shelter offers a temporary home and the means to transition to more permanent housing and productive life.

More than this, however, is a spiritual and moral imperative that comes from my faith, which repeatedly states that God is defender of the poor and the oppressed, not on the side of the satisfied wealthy and the oppressor:

“Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous.” (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, 118.5)

“Is it possible for one member of a family to be subjected to the utmost misery and to abject poverty and for the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible unless those members of the family be senseless, atrophied, inhospitable, unkind.” ('Abdu'l-Baha, Promulgation of Universal Peace, 102.5)

Our solemn duty to the trust of God in our midst is to do all we can for their well-being and development. Fear should be countered by facts and an open heart. The homeless are my neighbors. I take heart from scripture that we should not fear if we are acting in accord with the divine command to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Sincerely yours,



William P. “Bill” Collins