

Liz Cabrera

From: Don Cornelius <corndon1727@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 9:53 AM
To: Liz Cabrera
Subject: November 14th Planning Commission Meeting

Hi Liz:

I totally missed the chance to enter our comments at the November 14th Planning Commission meeting when I couldn't connect with the zoom call, but just in case they are still useful, here's what we would have said.

Don Cornelius

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed sale of city (publicly owned) land to PIA for providing needed housing in Petersburg. This proposed sale offers the city the opportunity to do it right so that the greater public is not left out of the process.

We have two areas of concern.

The first is the proposed retention of a public use easement along the Nature Trail between the elementary school and ball park. While it's obvious PIA's intentions are to preserve the trail, it doesn't appear to include the trail's full intent. Paul Loris originally conceived the Nature Trail as it is named -- a place where Petersburg students could experience our natural wonders in their own "backyard." A large number of us including local businesses gave up considerable time and money to make that happen.

Part of what makes this popular trail so valuable is it parallels a small stream which crosses the trail somewhere in the western portion of this proposed land disposal -- a little west of the bench. This is a case where prudent planners should honor the vision and intent of those who built and enjoy the trail by creating a significant green belt on either side of the creek and trail. This would also enhance the value of properties that PIA develops.

On the east side of 8th Street this right of way could be a little more narrow, but it would be nice if it included all of the trail since the trail seems to curve out of the easement on the east end. Knowing how PIA has been so proactive in providing recreational opportunities to Petersburg residents, we trust they will have a solution to this problem.

Our other area of concern is another watercourse in a bit of a ravine, this one running a little north of the Nature Trail. Rather than destroying this stream by running it through a culvert, doing it right would mean preserving the watercourse with a buffer of trees on either side. We can see this being accomplished by the city retaining a greenbelt or, given PIA's reputation for good stewardship of Borough lands, by PIA protecting the stream when they plat out their project.

We might point out that PIA is asking to transfer a rather large tract of land into private ownership with this purchase so we would think these withdrawals will allow them to proceed while still protecting other resource values.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely, Don and Karen Cornelius