

**McLean Community Center  
Public Comment on MCC Signage Project  
As of November 23, 2011**

**A. PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS**

1. Nancy Perry provided written copies of her comments for the record. She said that MPA was supported of the signage project. Ms. Perry described the relationship between MCC and MPA, noting the MPA provides visual arts programs through an agreement with MCC. She highlighted the classes provided by MPA on behalf of MCC. Ms. Perry indicated that MPA believes that its logo should be included on the main sign given the relationship between MCC and MPA. However, she reiterated MPA's support moving forward with the signage project. (See written comments in Attachment 1.)
2. Bari Levingston made comments that focused on two areas: no invitation to the Friends of McLean Central Park to participate in the meetings to develop of the signage project, and that there are future plans for the park that may result in needing to move the signs. Ms. Levingston said that she had made a request to participate in meetings on the signs sent by email approximately a year ago, and she had received no response. Therefore she had to make her comments at a public meeting. (MCC Note: there was a response to Ms. Levingston inviting her to attend upcoming Communications Committee meetings where the design discussions took place, but she did not respond to the invitation.) Ms. Levingston also said that she was member of the MPA board and that MPA should be on the main sign.
3. Jan Auerbach, a former Chair of the MCC Board, made comments on behalf of herself and Irv Auerbach. Ms. Auerbach provided a written copy of her comments. She gave a history of that signage process in 2000, in which she was involved. Ms. Auerbach noted among other things that the Board at that time had soundly rejected including an electronic sign. Ms. Auerbach's opinions/concerns about the new sign included among other issues: she did not like electric sign; believes that the design of the main sign does not fit it a park-like setting; and the Theatre's logo should not be on the sign. Ms. Auerbach also recommended renovating the current sign with more durable material, find a cheaper vendor to make the sign boards for the existing signs or make them in-house; and retain one logo for all of MCC. (See written comments in Attachment 2)
4. Lori Wertz, former MCC Board Member, asked why there is concern regarding MCC's sign adding color to the park when there is already a lot of color in the park's playground.
5. Gordon Thomas said the he would not paint any portion of the sign because it would require repainting. He said the brick walls should be sandblasted.
6. Jane Berkson, former President of the Friends of the McLean Community Center, said the she liked the updated, sleek look of the signs. The lettering was more modern. The signs overall were more striking.

7. Sander Bremer, current President of the Friends of MCC said that the designs provide a nice, new modern look.
8. Peter DiCenso, a nearby neighbor of MCC, said that there had been thorough by Board in developing the project. He said that he had no problems with the electronic display. There is a need for new signs.
9. Lee DiCenso, former member of the Governing Board and nearby neighbor voiced her support of the signage project.
10. Kevin Fay said that there were two main concerns. He did not favor putting a LED sign in the park. Among other things he said that he was concerned about opening a floodgate for requests for LED signs in county parks. He also said that work on changing the master plan for McLean Central Park would begin in June 2012. While the Park Authority has not prejudged the outcome of the changing the master plan, it is possible that the sign would have to be moved.
11. Sam Clay, the Director of the Fairfax County Public Library, said that he supported the signs, including the LED sign.
12. Joe Bakos of Chief Zoning Inspector for Fairfax County reviewed the parameters for the signs, including the height of sign, footprint, setback, and the LED sign. (Note from MCC: the MCC sign design meets the parameters.)
13. Dabney Cortina, a MPA staff member and McLean resident, said that she would like to see more information about the LED sign and to see samples of the sign.

## **B. COMMENTS IN COMMENT BOX**

14. # 2 – Definitely easiest to read!
15. Mayflower Drive, McLean VA: Looks great! Sleek design; (hate new MCC logo, just a chance to express opinion); LED screen great idea; would function well; generally don't like LED signs but in this case it works & is very practical; also allow for easy change; no concerns re project; current sign has become an eyesore.
16. Carol A. Overman: Nothing wrong with the signs we have; why spend the money.
17. Annette Daley: Negative about signs; does not like all of the signs; prefer current signs
18. Linda Lowry: Keep signage natural look, do not like the modern look of new signs; keep original signs/brick – maybe change lettering for easier visuals; the modern design does not fit the center of McLean environment; do not like cheesy LED signs; I like board & visuals but keep it natural.

19. Jean Schiro-Zavek: LED screen is a great idea, too expensive/difficult to change existing plastic letter inserts.
20. Kim Saxenian: Mostly positive except for new MCC logo. It is basic, uninspired and already looks dated. I think you should consider or at least take another look at it. Thanks.
21. Deborah Chotuar & Matt VanHook: Looks great to us!
22. Would like to have MPA on main sign
23. The sign should have MPA next to the Alden Theatres' sign. This is a must.
24. How come no mention of McLean Project for the Arts?! Aren't they part of MCC?
25. There does not seem to be a mention of MPA on the sign.
26. Daniele Paul: MCC is always great to offer the best for citizens – I think myself whatever the MCC offers to us, we always appreciate – as resident of Mclean for 44 years; McLean is my best spot for people – it changes better all the time – myself I like all the chances – since 1967 to now.
27. Pat Hackman: Direction 2; when driving by, clearer.
28. Coming from Churchill there is no sign for the Center.
29. G. Master: Why do we need a new sign??? Save the money or put it to a better use.
30. Barbara Carley: The logo has a problem with the background behind the M being so dark and too close in the value to the colors of the M. The lower C pops out at the beholder – yet it stands for the lesser important word of the three – need to we-work the colors – so M stands out.
31. Ainsby 22102: The actual “McLean Community Center” portion of the sign is entirely too small and unreadable – doesn't pop @ all! Who is going to read this?
32. Maya Huber: I understand the need for an LED screen which can be redacted from MCC offices directly. But this design is no improvement. It looks just like my kitchen oven: blond surround (wood), black metal w. signals & streaming messages, with brushed s/s touches. Surely, MCC has a tradition of quality with a little eloquence – leave brick unpainted, but power-washed, and stay away from kitchen-design.
33. Mary Gnuse: Leave signs as is. SAVE THE MONEY!
34. Peter DiCenso: Very tasteful! Pleasant color scheme! Let's put it up.

35. Lynley Ogilvie: Why can't we go for a little more color, a more classic look, a little more style??? I hate the current sign – what a wasted opportunity. Would much prefer a sign with dark green on a white background, for example. Classic lettering.
36. Catherine Hassi: Need better pedestrian crosswalks btw MCC & library – there are none where sidewalk ends on the street by parallel spaces. Also – dangerous where school bus stops on Ingleside w/ no cross for the kids! Also – do not care for lit signage.

### **C. EMAIL COMMENTS**

37. Louis Freeman: I have looked at the pictures of the proposed new signs, and here are my suggestions/questions:
  - a. Choose colors such that you do not have to paint the brick. Painting the brick just makes more future work and expense, forever.
  - b. The proposed sign for the intersection of route 123 and Ingleside has too much information for a 45 miles/hour-highway sign. Just have the MCC and the library on that sign, with bigger letters. The other signs on Ingleside, a slower-speed road, are fine.
  - c. Where will the controls for the LED sign be? It should be enough easier to manage changes to the LED sign to be worth the extra cost.

38. Sally Horn: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed sign. I have 3 comments to share:

I believe that the sign should include the McLean logo that the MCC Board is considering eliminating. For many of us, that logo is an identifier of McLean, as it is also used in some form on the street signs designating the limits of McLean/welcoming people to McLean/saying farewell. It can, however, be much smaller.

Similarly, I would suggest using the same color that is used on those signs -- green -- rather than the blue that has been suggested. Again, McLean already has a color scheme that signifies its identity. The MCC should keep this color scheme, not attempt to invent a new one.

Please ensure that the signage at the confluence of 123 and Old Dominion Drive is not so busy that it could create a traffic hazard.

39. Mike Slavik: To whom it may concern -
  - a. I have been a resident of McLean for more than 13 years and live only a few blocks from McLean Central Park.

- b. I am writing to voice my SUPPORT of the proposed LED sign for MCC at the corner of 123 and Old Dominion. The current, static sign is ineffective at communicating the variety programs at MCC and as a result many who are in the community may miss on some of the wonderful offerings at MCC.
  - c. The dynamic nature of the LED sign would enable the MCC to more completely communicate its program offerings to community.
40. Jennifer Smoyer: Whatever happened to brick and mortar? The current sign is an eye sore, but whoever agreed to a wooden sign in the woods? That sign is not that old and it's falling apart. What did the community pay for it?  
The next sign has to be something that sits well in a wooded lot and is not a flashing beacon!! We have enough traffic problems without a lit up sign making announcements to the community at a busy intersection.  
Please rethink this design. Keep it simple.
41. Patricia Ramirez: Please, do not put a Lead Sign on McLean Park. The one we have now is perfect. We do not want another ugly sign as the new one on McLean High School.
42. Mollie and Rich Maresco: As longtime residents of McLean (18 years) , we strongly oppose any LED signs in McLean. This includes the proposed signage for the McLean Community Center.
43. Mary An Glueckert:
- a. Spending \$90,000 on an LED sign is ridiculous - I thought the sign in the park was just upgraded within the last few years? Enough is enough folks, if you can't give the money back to the taxpayers to spend, than hold on to it, rainy days are here and will be here for some time. Is this how you plan to spend away the \$12 million. Honestly, it seems to me you are all itching to spend the money, use it wisely...invest in programs that will help this community. \$90,000 could be given away to the community's children for college scholarships - THINK please!

[MCC Follow Up: Thank you very much for taking the time to let us know your views on the signage project.

I'd like to let you know that the plan is not to spend \$90,000 on an LED sign. The estimated amount includes the entire project which includes 10 signs: the main sign (including the LED screen, signs at the intersections of 123 and Ingleside, Oak Ridge and Ingleside, the sign at the entrance to MCC, and the trail blazer signs along 123.

The signs were built in 2000 – with all of the attachments in wood, which has not stood up to weather. The proposed signs include features to make the signs weather resistant.

While I've given some explanations – we do appreciate your input.]

b. From the article I read it sounded like one sign...thank you for replying and explaining the entire story!

44. Regina Strong: I have just taken a look at the plans for the proposed renovation of the sign at the McLean Central Park and I'm writing to express my support of the new design. The current sign is very outdated so I was very happy to hear that a renovation is in the works. I live right around the corner from the park and drive past the sign quite frequently. I think the use of an LED display makes a lot of sense so that the message can be updated easily as needed.

45. Katherine Wendt: The reason I am opposed to the LED sign for MCC is that the scrolling requires the viewer to sit there long enough to wait through the entire scroll to see the message. The human eye can read several lines of text much more quickly if they are static and all presented at the same time.

For example, the church at the corner of Lewinsville Rd and Route 7 has a scrolling sign. I have never sat at the light long enough to be able to read a complete message so I have no idea what they are trying to communicate.

46. Patti Toenniessen: I do not vote for the proposed sign at the Park. It does NOT belong there, if the library wants a sign like that or the community center, then they can put one up in front of the area. Not on a main street  
----- it is way too commercial. They can put a sign up on Ingleside and 123 that has arrows point to library and community center and the people can drive by. This is a residential community, and it is a totally improper idea. I VOTE NO, Thank you for asking.

47. Jennifer Levy: I wanted to submit my comments in favor of the proposed updated signage for the McLean Community Center for the Board's consideration. I am a resident of the Tax District, as well as an active member of the McLean Community Players, a community theater group that performs four shows per year at The Alden Theatre. I think that the signage improvement is much needed and long overdue. The proposed improvements will allow the public to be more aware of the terrific, diverse programming available at the Center by publicizing upcoming events on an LED sign at the corner of Dolley Madison and Old Dominion Drive. The new signage would add welcome illumination to the information posted, which now is almost completely invisible in the evening. The new design is a tasteful update without being too overbearing at that important intersection.

I assume from the proposal that there will be better illumination of the sign at the entrance to the Center itself, on Ingleside Avenue. If not, I think there should be better illumination there as well, so that patrons to the Center in the evening don't mistakenly pass the Center by. I also wonder whether there is any illumination planned for the small markers that exist on the path to McLean Central Park from the parking area near the

library. If not, I think some illumination should also be considered for those markers, to make it easier for pedestrians to stroll into the park during the evening, when there is little or no lighting to guide the way there.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment on the proposal. I look forward to the Board proceeding with its plans.

48. Jan Auerbach: Sean and Kevin,

I saw Jack Wilbern this evening. He is the architect of the original sign. He said the wood that was used was only intended to last 5-7 years, and that is about how long it did last. He said now there is a synthetic material that looks exactly like wood and would last 20 years or more. He reminded me that he worked hard to find a brick to match the community center brick, with the intent that people would make the connection between the sign and the center and they would know what kind of building they were looking for. He agreed with the man at the hearing who said that painting brick is asking for substantial maintenance problems in the future. I asked him about the inserts. He is going to check with one of his suppliers but he guessed you could buy synthetic boards the length of the sign for about \$50. You could then have a plastic sheet that goes over them with the lettering you want and the sheet can be removed easily and replaced with another. Thus, the cost of renovating the existing sign seems to be substantially cheaper than the estimated cost of the new sign, and the use of reusable synthetic boards would make the update of information way cheaper than the \$150 per board that it is costing now. Jack told me he would send in comments tomorrow. I am letting you know all this just in case he misses the deadline. It would be prudent to talk with him to get particulars on his suggestions since they have the potential of saving the center and us taxpayers much money.

I wonder if you have also considered another aspect of the new sign. It was mentioned that there could be up to four lines of information and the information could change twice a day. No wonder Sam Clay likes the new design. He sees the potential for advertising upcoming library events on the sign. Risa wants to advertise Teen Center events on the sign. If the new sign is built, there will be substantially more work on the part of the staff to decide what goes on the sign and for how long. Now, because of the \$150 cost, information stays up a week or two. In the future, it could change twice a day. Figuring out who gets on the sign and for how long will become a substantial workload and will create the potential for many unhappy people who don't get the prominence or the length of time they think they deserve.

More food for thought.

49. Jim Bryant: Per Jan's quote in today's McLean Patch, please tell her that I agree wholeheartedly with her that no new sign at MCC is needed.

November 14, 2011

Members of the MCC Governing Board, Members of the Public:

McLean Project for the Arts is pleased to offer comments on the proposed signage for the McLean Community Center. We support the proposed signage and believe it is a significant improvement over existing signage.

As you know, in 1989 MPA entered into a public/private partnership with the McLean Community Center and Fairfax County in which MPA would provide the visual arts program for the community at the McLean Community Center. Under the agreement, MPA is provided space for its galleries and studio, and in exchange MPA provides a comprehensive visual arts program.

MPA presents 15-17 professionally curated exhibitions a year and more than one hundred-eighty art classes taught by professional educators for children and adults. In addition, MPA offers an innovative outreach program, called MPA ArtReach, serving thousands of students and senior citizens each year. MPA also presents MPAartfest, McLean's first outdoor arts festival in McLean Central Park.

As the visual arts partner of the MCC, McLean Project for the Arts works closely with the MCC to advertise our visual arts programs to the public. We believe the proposed signage will greatly improve our ability to advertise our location and our programs to the public. It is more visible to the public, more aesthetically pleasing and more informative. We are pleased that McLean Project for the Arts is listed on the directional signage at the corner of Rt. 123 and Ingleside as well as on the directional signage on Ingleside.

As the provider of the visual arts program for the MCC, MPA would of course prefer to be on all signage in which the McLean Community Center is featured, including the main sign at the corner of Rt. 123 and Old Dominion. We fear that the omission of MPA on the primary signage might in some way cause residents to believe we are NOT in the MCC complex and may cause confusion.

We support the proposed LED sign at the corner of Rt. 123 and Old Dominion because it will allow more programming to be advertised at this location, including major MPA events and programs.

We applaud the McLean Community Center for improving its signage to better serve the residents of Small Tax District I.

Sincerely,

Nancy Powers Perry  
Executive Director  
McLean Project for the Arts

Comments on Proposed Central Park Sign 11/14/11  
Jan and Irv Auerbach

1. History of Sign
  - a. Goal in 2000 was “to promote knowledge of the center, and to provide an attractive addition to the revitalization of McLean while informing people of community events”
  - b. Original idea was a pole with changeable banners at the Old Firehouse
  - c. Local architect Jack Wilbern then offered a design at McLean Central Park that included posters leading to Ingleside Avenue, the sign at the corner of Ingleside and Dolley Madison, the sign at Oak Ridge, and the sign at the entrance to the Center
    - i. Signs were in place in late 2000 or 2001
    - ii. Sign was a joint effort of the library, park, and center
    - iii. Collection of signs were intended to be informative not only of upcoming events but also to help people know where the center is located
  - d. At the time the board considered an electronic sign and soundly rejected the idea
    - i. The only electronic sign at McLean at the time was at McLean High School; the board heard a lot of negative feedback about that sign; the only good news since then is it has hardly ever worked
    - ii. Removable sign inserts were then \$100 each, some of which could be used from year to year
2. Concern with Current Sign
  - a. Electronic nature
    - i. I don't believe the feeling in McLean toward electronic signs has changed; they don't match the character of our community
  - b. Design of the Sign
    - i. The design is not as attractive and fitting in the park setting as the current design
  - c. Fate of the posters along Dolley Madison and sign at the Ingleside corner
    - i. The public hearing announcement was silent on their fate
    - ii. They would not match the design of the new sign so probably are planned to be removed; whatever help they provide in leading people to realize that the way to the Center is down Ingleside Avenue would be lost
  - d. Placement of Alden Theatre logo
    - i. The theatre is only one part of the offerings at the Center
    - ii. Rather than have a separate logo, it should use the MCC logo, as all other programs at the Center do
    - iii. If the concern is that people don't know where the theatre is, the use of a separate logo just perpetuates that lack of understanding
3. Recommendation
  - a. Renovate the current sign with more durable material
  - b. Find a cheaper vendor for the removable portions or make them in-house
  - c. Retain just one logo for all of MCC