

Mark Gabriele, President
Seven Oaks / Evanswood Citizens' Association
Silver Spring, MD 20910

October 15, 2007

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
VIA FACSIMILE to (301) 495-1320

Dear Mr. Hanson,

I am President of the Seven Oaks / Evanswood Citizens' Association, a Montgomery County-chartered civic organization representing more than 700 households and encompassing the area directly to the north and east of the Silver Spring central business district. I am writing to you to in regard to the Falkland Apartments. Our association has expressed, through a vote taken at our May 2007 general membership meeting, a unanimous desire to see the entire Falkland Apartment complex preserved in its present form.

Let me be clear; our association favors smart growth in the downtown Silver Spring area; however, we do not wish for our neighborhood and the area nearby to become simply another forest of high-rise apartment buildings. In the past four years, the downtown Silver Spring area has added thousands of units of housing. Our association has welcomed many of them openly, and opposed none of them. The Falkland Apartments have more going for them than just a rich and proud history; they constitute an entire neighborhood unto themselves. It is a real neighborhood, in the sense that it is open to the public; anyone can stroll along its paths and enjoy the environment created by its careful design. That neighborhood will be lost forever if the Falkland Apartments are replaced by yet another high-rise apartment complex.

“Smart growth” necessitates a willingness to weigh the drawbacks associated with additional development against the potential benefits. In this case, it appears that if re-development of the Falkland Apartments is permitted, our community will lose a neighborhood, as well as an historic landmark; and get a six-fold increase in the density of housing on that property, plus its associated burden on our local infrastructure, plus the inevitable impacts on traffic that would be caused by construction at an already congested intersection. We oppose this development and ask that the application be denied.

Sincerely,

Mark Gabriele, President, SOECA