



April 28, 2021

To the membership of the Economic Development Authority,

The University of Mary Washington is an integral and active part of the Fredericksburg Community and has partnered with organizations in the community in different ways for decades: students volunteering or interning locally and faculty working with local organizations toward common goals. Wherever possible the University seeks to support and collaborate with community organizations to advance our common missions. The prospect of Downtown Greens acquiring the Braehead Buffer provides a unique opportunity to continue this community engagement. UMW strongly supports the goals and vision that Downtown Greens has for this green space in our community.

The Braehead Buffer is part of the last farmland in Fredericksburg. The majority of the land is mature forests, with smaller acreages of pastureland. Downtown Greens intends to use this property to further its mission in three areas: Sustainable Agriculture including workforce development, Environmental Education, and Land Conservation. All of these uses provide meaningful educational opportunities for the members of the UMW community. The Braehead Buffer could provide an area within the bounds of the city to bring youth and adults face to face with the environment we should all know more about. The property is also adjacent to the Lee Drive portion of the Fredericksburg Battlefield and, as such, is part of a larger green space in Fredericksburg. While development in other parts of the city fragments wildlife habitats, this property could remain part of a significant, protected, wooded area in the city.

Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences have visited the land and expressed interest in exploring the educational opportunities it provides. Although we do not have any active projects with Downtown Greens, the Braehead Buffer opens the door to such opportunities. Our faculty often seek out local areas of representative biodiversity. For example, the forested, wet soils common on the Braehead Buffer provide a unique setting for teaching and learning. Our faculty are also excited to collaborate with Downtown Greens on curricula for outdoor education programs.

In summary, the Braehead Buffer is a unique parcel of land, well situated to serve the educational and research needs of the University. We strongly support the vision Downtown Greens has articulated for its use.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith E. Mellinger".

Dr. Keith E. Mellinger, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences