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## VIA Comments on Town Commons Tree Planting Proposal

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Cc: csk15@atlanticbb.net, Julie Harris <jharris@irvingtonva.gov>, Charles Dyson <cdyson@irvingtonva.gov>

Dear Irvington Town Council:

It is our understanding that the Council intends to discuss and vote on the plan to locate trees on the Irvington Commons. While we agree in principle with continued improvement and beautification of the Town Commons and other facilities, we do have concerns with the layout as posted on the Town website. As a primary user of the Commons, we suggest that advance coordination with VIA regarding this layout is important to ensure minimization of negative impact to events that benefit Town residents.

1. The proposed layout will eliminate at least 29% of the perimeter spaces for the Irvington Farmer's Market. These are the most valued spaces and where farmers and other key food producers are located. **For the 2025 Farmers Market season, all (100%) of perimeter spaces are already sold-out for every market date. Canceling this many vendors who require perimeter space would result in severe negative financial and reputational consequences for VIA, the Town, and the vendors. And Town residents would lose some of the market's most popular vendors.**
2. The proposed layout blocks the side entrance to the storage shed and eliminates vehicle access to the shed, which is necessary to support VIA activities.
3. The proposed layout prevents vehicle access to service or replace the porta potties. It also does not provide space for additional porta-potties that are required for concerts, parades, the Crab Festival, and other events.
4. The trees planned on Tavern Road will eliminate coveted Tavern Road market spaces for vendors with specialty side-facing trailer set-ups. There are no alternate locations for these vendors.

Our recommendation is as follows:

1. Eliminate the Magnolias on Tavern Road and move the Tupelo Trees towards the gazebo 15 feet, while avoiding the septic drain field. This provides some shade for the area, while still allowing Market vendors and other vehicles to continue to park on Tavern Road.
2. Eliminate or relocate trees to provide vehicular paths to both doors of the VIA shed as well as the porta-potties. The porta-potty area should be redesigned to allow for up to six units.
3. Eliminate or relocate the two Tupelo trees and three Redbud trees at the southern end of the playground area. These trees will likely be damaged by vehicles during Markets and severely limit key vendor spots.
4. Eliminate or relocate the seven Serviceberry Trees that extend northward from the museum deck.

We truly appreciate the Town's generosity in allowing the VIA to hold events on the Irvington Commons. However, for us to continue to bring award winning events to Irvington, we would ask that the Town consider the impact that these changes would have to the highly-valued events that are held on the Commons.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Kimmeth, President

Heather Sheehan, Board Member & Farmers Market Manager

Irvington Village Improvement Association