

Replies from Arlington County Board on ASF March 19, 2020  
Request for the County to Purchase 6407 Wilson Blvd., the Rouse Property

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ASF Member Anne Bodine presented the March 19 ASF letter and spoke at the March 21 county board meeting. The board did not address purchase of the Rouse property. Bodine raised the issue again at an online Open Door Monday meeting with Board Chair Garvey on April 13. Garvey said the board inquired but was not able to make a purchase because the property was under contract.

Subsequently, on April 27, [Our Man in Arlington](#), Charlie Clark, published the following information in the Falls Church News-Press, April 27, 2020

"This year's push for the county to buy Rouse's property was initiated by civic activist Suzanne Sundburg. In emails, she complained that the county resisted because the land is 'not suitable' for a school and because of its proximity to Upton Hill Regional Park, even though it 'has a beautiful, open, flat lawn space that could be perfect both for passive and active recreation,' she wrote. The proposal to acquire it was echoed by Peter Rousselot and the nonprofit Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future, which filed a Freedom of Information Act request for county deliberations. The Arlington Historical Society is paying attention, and preservationist Tom Dickinson filed an application for Local Historic District Designation.

Board Chair Libby Garvey recently responded to a citizen inquiry that said the property was for sale and contacted the seller's agent, but gave up upon learning there was already a contracted buyer at a high price. But on Monday, Garvey told me that statement 'took it a step too far,' due to "information flying fast during the pandemic." While there are valid offers, the land is not yet under contract. The 'agent' suggested, and what seems more realistic given the competition from homebuilders, is that the property 'is not at a price the county would want to pay right now.'

'Trustees have not actively marketed the property,' reads the statement given me April 27 by CPA Sid Simmonds, representing the Rouse trust. 'In spite of not marketing the property, we received a number of unsolicited offers. The trustees had a fiduciary duty to review each offer. We retained a consultant to assist us in reviewing the offers and provide analysis and recommendations. We did not retain an agent to market the property. Most offers were filed away to revisit if the trustees decided to actively market the property. However, the trustees did receive one unsolicited offer that we felt must be pursued. The offer was from a reputable party, but it includes a confidentiality requirement and we cannot provide further information.'"