



The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, Inc.

P.O. Box 203, Mount Vernon, VA 22121-9998

<http://www.mvcca.org>

Dear Members of the American Horticultural Society Board

September 11, 2020

Subject: The Sale of River Farm and Disestablishment of the American Horticultural Society (AHS)

The Mount Vernon Council of Citizen's Associations (MVCCA) is a 501(C) that was established in 1969. We represent the homeowner, condo and civic associations located within the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County. Our mission includes land use, health and human services and environmental issues as they impact the Mount Vernon District and its citizens.

Your society headquarters at River Farm is also located in the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County, therefore, what you do matters greatly to our members and our board. Many of our members are also AHS members and donors. Therefore, this letter is being sent to inform you of our serious concerns over your recent announcement to sell River Farm and be absorbed into the APGA.

River Farms long history of owners is in itself historic, and the current acreage represents the last open to the public for free parcels once owned by George Washington and home of the Piscataway Native American Tribe members. This history by itself should give you pause about selling. Furthermore, the stresses of today weigh heavy on citizens in our area and River Farm offers a peaceful calming site to relax in and wash away that stress. Additionally, the potential destruction of the River Farm gardens, meadow, and old growth trees that can come with development simple does not support your AHS mission and values.

We have concerns that you applied for and were approved for PPP funds. The timing of that along with the soon after announcement to sell – strikes our board as odd. While we understand some of your fund-raising events have stopped recently, we feel that you should start a major fund-raising campaign. As a non-profit you pay no property taxes, you have a large national membership base and there are numerous charitable trusts, grants, and other avenues that you can and should pursue now.

Your website clearly states that Enid Haupt's financial gift to AHS intended for River Farm and your society stay open to the public. Your priority should be to honor her intent and her generous gift to AHS.

We encourage you to reconsider what you have planned and work harder to keep River Farm as your headquarters, open to the public, and continue to expand your environmental sustainability gardening mission.

B. Lynn Pascoe

Co-Chair

MVCCA