

Remarks to City Council

9/13/2025

Good morning, my name is Mary Lou Egan. It is a pleasure to be here.

I am a resident of Alexandria, a Commissioner on the Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, a PhD economic development economist and retired business school professor. My remarks today are entirely my own.

Let me begin by putting on my Prof. Egan hat and steely glare.

Imagine that I have assigned my MBA class a classic business case as their final exam. It involves the choice of locations for a new industrial building. It's entitled "Does a Pump Station belong in a Historic Public Park"?

All MBA students worth their salt will try to negotiate for hints. So being the kind person that I am, I offer three hints:

HINT 1. Look at the contextual evidence:

- 3000 plus signatures on a petition quickly put together by a bunch of amateurs.
- Reading the room at the last two outreach meetings by the City, there was no traction on getting feedback about a smaller pump building still located in the park.

Begin your analysis with the fact that as long as there is a proposal for the pump station in the park, there will be strong opposition that will be costly to the City and delay the project.

HINT 2. Don't fall into the common trap of ignoring viable options because they are introduced later along the project's time line.

Note that architects Cox and Beckmann's alternative location outside the park takes advantage of their later entry. They incorporate the City's pump station engineering and simply move it whole cloth to an empty commercial space outside the park.

HINT 3. Find the missing information that is essential to compare alternatives and apply it before reaching a decision.

The City argues on cost criteria alone that no location is cheap enough to beat the park because the park is free – right?

No, we don't know that. No one can tell without the revenue side. Currently, half of the basic information to make any comparison is missing.

FAIR WARNING MBAs: Making a location decision without this basic cost/benefit information would elicit screams of despair from business school professors across the country -- and an immediate failing grade.

So let me cut to the chase for this scenario.

- It's not too late to avoid the costs of drawn-out opposition and delays.
- There is a technically viable solution that is outside the park. To compare locations requires real data and some creativity.
- Don't miss this opportunity to look like heroes by finding a solution outside the park. Take the time to give yourselves the chance.
- Let's get going and put our energies together. Don't fail your exam.

Thank you.