

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Shelley Castle 703-568-0188

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Save Woodlawn Stables Disappointed with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Choice to Pursue Restaurateur and Arcadia Founder's Vision for Woodlawn Plantation Historic District rather Than Preserve Woodlawn's Equestrian Heritage



Save Woodlawn Stables (SWS) is greatly saddened by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's (NTHP) announcement that it has decided to proceed in the development of Woodlawn Plantation's historic property rather than preserving the Plantation's century long history as a livestock and equestrian farm. As stated in their [press release](#), NTHP will start developing the property with Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture, founded by entrepreneur and owner of the Neighborhood Restaurant Group (NRG), Michael Babin. Arcadia's plans to take over the stewardship of Woodlawn are outlined in its [proposal](#) presented to Mt. Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland which can be [seen here](#).

Thousands of citizens have publicly advocated for the preservation and retention of equestrian facilities at Woodlawn. The community has made it exceedingly clear that it would like to see the meadows and pastures of Woodlawn remain as symbols of its equestrian heritage. While understanding the need for changes due to the challenges of running a self-sustaining museum property and the construction of the Route 1 Bypass, SWS and other equestrian consultants have presented mixed-used proposals that would include both an equestrian facility and Arcadia. Supporters are greatly disappointed that the NTHP and Arcadia have chosen not to support a promising and all-encompassing multi-use facility on the property that could have honored both the equestrian and the agricultural history of the Plantation.

The founders of Save Woodlawn Stables will continue to work as a consulting party in the Federal Highways process on the Rt. 1 widening project. The FHWA put forward a good compromise to support and follow through with the construction of the new barns to replace those lost in the Woodlawn Historic District. We are pleased to see that the NTHP acknowledges that by losing one of the last remaining public equestrian facilities in our area, the community is due mitigation in the form of a new facility. SWS supports the construction of the barn facility at the nearby Laurel Hill Park, which currently has no structures to house horses for the public to access or ride. SWS will be working closely with the NTHP, FHWA, and Fairfax County for this alternative proposal and to ensure that any funding awarded is directed specifically to the construction of barn facilities for the public. While Save Woodlawn Stables may change in name, we will begin working closely with Fairfax for Horses, which is currently in charge of assisting the Fairfax County Park Authority with planning and construction of the Laurel Hills Park equestrian facility.

As a grassroots organization, thousands of SWS supporters came together and tirelessly advocated not only for the love of the Woodlawn Stables, the horses, all the

owners through the generations and the many lives that have been changed by the stables, but also for our love of Woodlawn Plantation and our part of its history. We will not forget Woodlawn even if the NTHP chooses a new direction for this property. A direction that chooses not to recognize its equestrian heritage, or the good stewardship of those who have maintained and cared for the historic barns and fields for over fifty years. Rather, we as founders of SWS will continue to watch carefully the changes that will be proposed to the Woodlawn Historic District. We will stay very involved and monitor the impact of Arcadia's proposal and the presented commercial development has on Woodlawn's historic integrity. We hope our followers and supporters will continue to do the same as we help preserve what is left after such losses.

Additional updates on how you can support preserving a community equestrian farm and having the FHWA relocate the construction of the new barn facility to Laurel Hill Park will follow.