



April 6, 2007

Mayor C. Nelson Harris
and Members of City Council
City of Roanoke
215 Church Avenue, S. W., Room 452
Roanoke, Virginia 24011-1594

RE: Mill Mountain

Dear Mayor Harris and Members of Roanoke City Council:

On April 2, 2007, the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation (RVPF) Board met to discuss preservation projects and issues in the Roanoke Valley. We discussed the issue of Mill Mountain and the Board voted to oppose any commercial development on Mill Mountain. We support the provisions set forth in the Council adopted *Roanoke Comprehensive Plan 2001-2020* and its 2006 amendment which incorporated the *Mill Mountain Park Management Plan*. Both of these documents were publicly developed and supported by citizens; they cite a prevailing sentiment among the public for keeping the mountain natural. Mill Mountain is one of our greatest assets and critical amenities. Its natural environment and undeveloped ambiance should be protected and carefully guarded for future generations.

In addition, we support the original intentions of the Fishburn family declared in the transfer of the Mill Mountain property to the City of Roanoke. Specifically, the language in the deed states that the property is to be "developed and forever preserved, improved and maintained for the use and pleasure of the people of the City of Roanoke, Virginia, and vicinity as a public park."

To ensure that this original intent is sustained, the RVPF recommends that Roanoke City Council establish a conservation easement on the Mill Mountain property. Commercial development of this precious resource should not occur. An easement will ensure Mill Mountain preservation for the future. Finally, we urge City Council to uphold the adopted Environmental Policy for Views and Viewsheds set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and pursue the action strategy for implementing this policy. Specifically, on pages 49 and 50:

Policy EC P3 for Viewsheds: Roanoke will protect steep slopes, ridgetops, and viewsheds within the City as important environmental and scenic resources and will cooperate regionally to protect such resources located outside of the City.

Action EC A9: Develop a viewshed protection ordinance and seek regional approaches.

While we commend Valley Forward for its community efforts, we recommend that another location be considered for this type of commercial development.

Respectfully,

Evelyn A. Slone
President

P. O. Box 1366
Roanoke, VA
24007