May 28, 2013

Dr. Sherwood Wilson

Vice President for Administrative Services

248 Burruss Hall (0182)

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, VA 24061

Dear Dr. Wilson:

On May 24 the Arboretum Committee received the document entitled *Indoor Athletic Facility Board of Visitors Site Options Evaluation* from the Friends of Stadium Woods (FSW). FSW obtained the document through a FOIA request to the University.

The Arboretum Committee would like to reiterate its position that the committee should be consulted whenever there is potential for damage to the campus tree resource. The committee is very discouraged that we were not consulted to assist with this athletic facility site evaluation during the planning process. This is particularly troubling since the committee has worked collaboratively with the Office of University Planning on several matters this year which resulted in positive outcomes for many user groups. We had hoped this signaled a new era of transparent planning by the University. In fact, I wrote in a letter (dated March 11, 2013) to your office regarding the 460 interchange, “The committee would like to acknowledge the work of the university, and in particular Asst. Vice President Soileau, in relocating the road away from the old white oak woodland. We look forward to this sort of positive collaborative process in future university planning.”

This new development with the Indoor Practice Facility indicates otherwise.

Specifically, the Arboretum Committee could have helped eliminate mistakes in the plan and provided guidance with regard to a scoring metric called “tree impact.” What tree experts were consulted to arrive at the scores for the tree impact metric? It is unclear from the plan what this metric is based on, but we take exception to several of the rankings. In particular, the “Practice Fields” option has a tree impact of 5/10. This is a completely unreasonable score, given that the hillside will have to be cut into severely to accommodate two 75-yard practice fields. This will remove major portions of tree root systems, increase sunlight into the woods causing a proliferation of invasive species, and cause further deterioration of the tree canopy through new “edge effects.” The northern portion of Stadium Woods will decline severely in a relatively short time.

To be clear, the **Virginia Tech Arboretum Committee is strongly opposed to any site option that impacts any portion of the Stadium Woods dripline.**

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further and trust we will be consulted as the planning process continues.

Sincerely,

John R. Seiler

Chair, Arboretum Committee

cc: Jason Soileau