

Myers Park Neighborhood Association
August 27, 2016

Statement Regarding Abatement of Noise from Cascades Park Amphitheater

The Myers Park Neighborhood Association is, on the whole, greatly appreciative of Cascades Park, with one exception: the intrusive and continuous noise that emanates from the amphitheater whenever sound amplification is employed. In addition to the harm and discomfort this noise causes to the neighborhood and its residents, it also devalues our property. And this violates a fiduciary relationship between the government and the citizens whereby citizens purchase property, pay taxes on that property for many years, and make improvements to their property with the expectation that the government will protect their property and investment. Our local government caused this problem, and now must mitigate it.

The relevant planning authorities were warned about the potential noise problem as plans were being put into place to build a larger amphitheater than originally conceived, and aim it at our neighborhood. These warnings were ignored, and no sound experts were consulted. Then, as predicted, the noise from amplified events began to intrude unreasonably on various sections of both the Myers Park and Woodland Drives neighborhoods. Only after the neighborhoods employed their own sound engineer did the Tallahassee-Leon County Intergovernmental Agency take serious note of our complaints, and they voted, in September 2015, with only one dissension, to fund a noise abatement wall at a cost of \$500,000. In the eleven months since that vote no progress has been made vis-à-vis actually planning and building the wall.

In addition, we were promised a more neighborhood-friendly permanent sound system for use at local events. Even this has not been provided, and local events are often more bothersome to some residents than the larger ticketed events.

Instead, the neighborhoods have been offered excuses.

First came the proposal to add a partial covering to the amphitheater. Sound engineers had to be consulted, and they concluded that it would not impact the design requirements for the wall. So our hopes were raised. But now further delays have been imposed.

(1) There is a proposal to develop the land on which the wall would be built, with the idea of using the proposed dwellings as a noise barrier. Developing this public green park space we regard as unacceptable for various reasons, which we address in a separate document. But those objections aside, there is the obvious problem of finding people willing to live in dwellings that would be serving as a noise barrier for the amphitheater, and would also be next to a railway line that conveys very loud trains. One proposal we have seen suggests that people would be willing to pay \$300,000 or more for townhouses in such a development. We think this very unlikely. Furthermore, such a development could take many years to complete, meaning that we get no relief for that period. And what if it is never completed? (Contractors do go bankrupt, after all.)

(2) The issue of a more extensive covering of the amphitheater has been raised, with the necessity of consulting sound engineers yet again.

(3) The concern that the noise from the train would reflect off the proposed wall and disrupt concerts has again been raised. But this has already been addressed by sound engineers: the noise would simply reflect back onto the train. (And, furthermore, if it were going to be a problem, it would also reflect off any proposed development.)

(4) The issue of the number of complaints has also again been raised. But just because we have not been complaining does not mean that we have nothing to complain about. It is simply that we have complained so much that we assume the relevant authorities know that there is a noise problem. And we placed our faith in the vote taken last September to build a wall to mitigate it.