

DCNA statement to Fire District 41 commissioners, March 8, 2011

My name is Scott Morris. I am speaking tonight as the president of the Denny Creek Neighborhood Alliance – DCNA – which is a Finn Hill-based neighborhood association with members and supporters from nearly 300 households.

DCNA was established in 1993 to preserve, protect, and restore the natural resources of the Denny Creek watershed and its surroundings. We have been active in forming the Finn Hill Park and Recreation District, in restoring O.O. Denny Creek, mapping the watershed, promoting a zoning ordinance to preserve trees and prevent erosion, and preserving the Juanita Woodlands.

Last month The DCNA board of directors considered the fire district's proposal to construct a new station in Big Finn Hill Park. We voted to express our opposition to that proposal at this evening's meeting. We did so for one simple reason: green space – in this case, King County park land – must not be re-allocated for development simply because it appears to be difficult or expensive to find an alternative site. Finn Hill is blessed with significant parcels of forest and wetlands; they are the defining features of this area. They are priceless recreational and educational resources.

Our woodlands and watercourses are already under stress due to increasing urbanization. If we continue to chip away at them, they will become disconnected patches of green space; their health fail and their attraction to hikers and bicyclists will vanish.

We recognize that you are responsible for providing adequate fire protection and emergency services at a reasonable cost. We recognize that any site you consider will entail trade-offs, and that the choices you face are complex. We do not doubt that you are addressing these matters in good faith.

But we feel strongly that that the woodlands in the Park are not an acceptable site for a new fire station. We question whether you have exhausted all other options. We need to hear more from you about each of the alternatives you have considered, whether you have pursued them in depth, and what obstacles they present. We hope you will seriously consider additional alternatives that district residents may suggest.

Thank you for holding this community meeting. We urge you to keep the community advised about the process and the substance of your deliberations. DCNA will be happy to help disseminate information throughout the neighborhood and will be happy to meet with you to discuss alternatives for a station – other than alternatives that would sacrifice our remaining woods and wetlands.