

**Postal Regulatory Commission
Office of the Chief Admin. Officer**

SEP 26 2011

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POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

September 22, 2011

Shoshana Grove
Secretary of the Commission
Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20268-0001

Re: Appeal of closure of Pimmit branch - Falls Church, VA 22043

Dear Ms. Grove:

This letter is my petition for review of the decision of the Postal Service to close the Pimmit Branch located at 7520 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22043. The notification of closing was in a letter from George S. Chichester dated September 14, 2011 (attached hereto), which stated that the Pimmit Branch, located at 7520 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA, will discontinue operations on November 10, 2011. I am requesting that the decision to close the Pimmit Branch be reversed.

The closure date of November 10, 2011, is fewer than 60 days from the notification of closing by letter dated September 14, 2011. Thus, there is not a 60-day notice period before the closing date of November 10, 2011.

This letter is being sent by mail to George S. Chichester, Senior Manager, Post Office Operations, 8409 Lee Highway, Merrifield, VA 22081-9998.

I am also requesting a suspension of the determination to close the Pimmit branch pending the outcome of the appeal to the Commission. The Pimmit branch is scheduled to close on November 10, 2011. If the branch were closed on that date and the appeal to this Commission is successful, then the remedy would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. It is financially feasible to keep the branch open pending the outcome of the appeal to the Commission.

There are a number of very good reasons to keep the Branch open. I use the

Pimmit branch for both business and personal mail. I walk to the Pimmit branch. It is very convenient and the postal workers there are extremely knowledgeable and friendly.

The first benefit to staying open concerns the financial situation of the Postal Service. I believe that the Pimmit Branch is profitable. It is in a very convenient place and is used by many neighbors and businesses. Although the Postal Service has extremely severe budget problems, those problems will not be alleviated by closing profitable branches and losing customers.

Second, there were no public processes and notice or comment period concerning the closing of the Pimmit Branch. The letter dated September 14, 2011, provided the notice of closing. The many loyal patrons of the Pimmit Branch were taken by complete surprise. This abrupt and unexplained closure cannot be the proper way to treat customers and run a successful business.

There was no previous notice to postal customers that the Pimmit Branch was being considered for closure. There apparently was a survey for post office box customers. In a letter dated January 21, 2010, to Roberts S. Gingell, who was then Senior Manager of Post Office Operations, I pointed out that a survey given only to post office box customers is a completely invalid survey. Because the Postal Service is required to provide a public service for all customers, there must be a fair and open process before the decision is made to close a branch.

Third, I am concerned that the Postal Service is treating the branches simply as a location for post office boxes, instead of an opportunity to provide a service to patrons. The letter dated September 14, 2011, first addresses post office box customers. It fails to address the needs of postal customers who rely on the assistance of the very skilled and helpful postal workers at the Pimmit Branch. The workers there do so much to engender good feelings with the customers. Losing those workers would be getting rid of one of the best assets of the Postal Service.

Further, the letter mentions that there are a number of other convenient offerings, such as the Carrier Pickup Program. I do not believe that having a carrier pick up my work-related material is at all feasible. I assume that, if the Pimmit Branch is closed, I will have to use Federal Express or UPS more frequently. Thus, the Postal Service will probably lose more of my business and the business of other customers. Again, the budget problems of the Postal Service cannot be addressed by doing away with profitable and valuable services.

I am an attorney and work out of my home. I need to have the Pimmit Branch to mail matters related to my business. A trip to the Falls Church Finance Station at 800 West Broad Street, Falls Church, VA, can require a bus trip and the total travel time could be two hours. The West Broad Street is also not a convenient location for customers who

are driving, because of the traffic and lack of parking. Further, there are stairs to climb from the front entrance, so it is not as accessible for those with mobility problems. The measure of convenience, particularly in an urban area with extreme traffic problems, should not be in terms of miles from one post office to another. It can require a half hour or more to get to a branch which is even a mile or two away. The Pimmit Branch is readily accessible by automobile and foot.

There are many apartments and businesses near the Pimmit Branch. In terms of community planning, there is now an emphasis on encouraging pedestrian traffic and mixed-use facilities. Closing the Pimmit Branch is a decision directly opposite to the present best practices in planning. The closure would force many people to make special trips by car to an out-of-the-way destination to use the post office. Any trip by car in the Tysons Corner area would probably take at least an hour. With the construction going on around Tysons Corner, that commute has become even more difficult.

I am fully aware of the financial problems of the United States Postal Service. However, making it difficult, if not impossible, to use branches - by requiring trips of an hour or more to get to a branch - will only contribute to further declines in business and ill-will of customers.

I will more fully develop these arguments after I have had an opportunity to review the administrative record and do further research.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,


Elaine Mittleman

Attachment



September 14, 2011

Postal Customer
Pimmit Branch
Falls Church, VA

This is official notification that the Pimmit Branch, located at 7520 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA will discontinue operations effective close of business on November 10, 2011. If you are currently receiving letter carrier delivery, there will be no change to your delivery service.

If you are a post office box customer, you have the option of post office box delivery at the Falls Church Finance Station located at 800 W Broad St, Falls Church, VA, or you may receive carrier delivery at your residence. You may be entitled to a partial refund of your prepaid Post Office Box rent. Please see the window clerk for details. You will be required to change your mailing address if you are currently renting a Post Office Box.

Movers Guides are included for your convenience to notify the Postal Service and correspondents of your new mailing address.

Full retail service hours at the Falls Church Finance Station are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday. The post office box lobby is open 24 hours for customer convenience. Other offices available to offer post office box service include the Dunn Loring Branch of Vienna, VA located 2.2 miles and the Merrifield Retail Unit located at 8409 Lee Highway, Merrifield.

Please note that the Postal Service has developed a number of convenient offerings that can save customers a trip to the Post Office. Customers can buy stamps online through our website at www.usps.com or by phone at 1-800-STAMP24. Our Click-N-Ship service on www.usps.com enables customers to print shipping labels with postage for Express Mail and Priority Mail and request that the items be picked up via our Carrier Pickup Program. Customers also can place their mail on hold, file a change-of-address order, or request the redelivery of an item for which a notice was left by calling 1-800-ASK-USPS or visiting www.usps.com.

If you have any questions, you may call Donna Bradley, Postmaster, Falls Church, VA, at 703-532-8504.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George S. Chichester".

George S. Chichester
Sr. Manager, Post Office Operations
8409 Lee Highway
Merrifield, VA 22081-9998

Enclosures