

**Joint Meeting of the Arlington Select Board and the  
Arlington Redevelopment Board  
Monday, September 21, 2020, 7:00 PM  
Meeting Conducted Remotely via Zoom  
Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

**SELECT BOARD PRESENT:** John Hurd (Chair), Joseph Curro, Stephen DeCoursey, Lenard Diggins, Diane Mahon

**REDEVELOPMENT BOARD PRESENT:** Rachel Zsembery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Kin Lau, Katherine Levine-Einstein, David Watson

**STAFF:** Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager, Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development, Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development, Doug Heim, Town Counsel, Ashley Maher, Administrative Assistant

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The Select Board Chair called the meeting to order and notified all attending that the meeting is being recorded by ACMi.

The Select Board Chair explained that this meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 20. This order from Governor Baker allows for meetings to be held remotely during this time to avoid public gatherings.

The Select Board Chair introduced the second agenda item, Presentation and Discussion (led by Town Manager / Director of Planning and Community Development). Town Manager welcomed both Boards and participants. Ms. Raitt reviewed the previous joint meeting on January 13, 2020 and agreed upon next steps from that meeting. The issues discussed were: current housing needs, affordability crisis, plans in progress for Arlington, both Boards would meet and review and discuss warrant articles and zoning bylaws amendments, affordable housing trust fund and transfer fee, proposed articles which were prepared for Spring Town Meeting, discussed an outreach strategy for a community dialogue around housing.

Ms. Raitt said that after the previous joint Board meeting the following was solidified: Town Meeting process, public outreach/engagement strategy called the "Question Campaign". Ms. Raitt said that the Department's Question Campaign resulted in the following themes: diversity, diverse housing types, affordable housing and affordable housing preservation, greater density, economic development, taxes, and regional issues and concerns. The Planning Department is still sorting through the Question Campaign results.

Ms. Raitt said that a transportation plan called Connect Arlington is in the works which should be wrapped up by years end. Ms. Raitt said that the Planning Department is also working on a Net Zero plan with the Clean Energy Future Committee to help Arlington achieve net zero by the 2050 goal. Ms. Raitt said that there is a study of Economic Analysis in Industrial zoning districts to create zoning to support a variety of sizes and spaces for light manufacturing and office spaces, establishing parking requirements, minimize the environmental impact of impervious surfaces, leverage the connection with the Minuteman Bike Way, require sustainable and creative urban design, and support economic development. Ms. Raitt said the department is also developing design guidelines for single and two-family housing in the lower density zones of town and updating the Housing Production Plan.

Ms. Raitt said the focus this year has been on the pandemic and the Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force was created to utilize Community Development Block Grant funds. These funds have been used to assist local business and help local residents with rental assistance. Ms. Raitt said that Application Modernization is also being looked at to expedite the internal and external review processes for permits. Additional assistance for recovery and supporting the business community through the winter as well as looking at the arts and cultural activities. Housing Production Plan is set to expire in October of 2021 looking to update the plan, develop new strategies and include the Metro Mayors housing goals. The

Select Board Chair asked if Board Members had questions or comments. Mr. Diggins asked about engaging MAPC to work on the Housing Production Plan. Ms. Raitt said that MAPC is working on updating community housing targets.

Mrs. Mahon asked for feedback and comments from the 10/5 ARB meeting, asked if outdoor dining through the cold weather is being addressed Ms. Raitt said that any current business that has a temporary outdoor license would need a review from the Fire Department to review and approve the installation of heaters. Mrs. Mahon asked if there are Redevelopment Board articles that the Select Board should also review for Town Meeting. Mrs. Mahon asked for Gold's Gym industrial study updates when available. Mrs. Mahon also asked about plans for Community Preservation Act and Open Spaces projects using a 3D imaging tool. Mr. Lau said he agreed that the using 3D imaging would help to address zoning issues. Mr. Chapdelaine said that the Town is currently pricing this type of 3D imaging work for along Mass Ave and to see how much it would increase the price to include open spaces. Ms. Raitt said that SketchUp will be used in the meantime.

Mr. Curro asked if when preparing the updated housing production plan the team would also be taking a look at what was previously approved and analyzing the Town's achievements towards that benchmark. Mr. Curro asked about residents looking for rental assistance and support. Mr. DeCoursey asked about support for businesses during the winter. Ms. Raitt said that the department is working to build in support for businesses during the winter.

Mr. DeCoursey asked about inconsistencies between the housing production plan and the economic analysis and if the studies being conducted in town be incorporated with the updated Housing Production Plan. Ms. Raitt said that the department is trying to address those issues while keeping building options open. Mr. Watson said that the pandemic may have increased the urgency of housing development in Arlington. Ms. Raitt said that the discussion is to either keep the Question Campaign as a separate campaign or to include those efforts with the Housing Production Plan development.

Mr. Lau asked the Select Board for feedback regarding the Redevelopment Board's performance over the past year. The Select Board Chair said that the Redevelopment Board thoroughly analyzes each project put before them. Mr. Diggins said that he would like to be more involved with housing with Housing Implementation Plan Committee and will have feedback for the Redevelopment Board at the next joint meeting. Mrs. Mahon said that she would like to have additional joint meetings with the Redevelopment Board to put forth the positive agenda for Arlington. Mr. Curro said that it may not be appropriate for the Select Board to weigh in on the Redevelopment Board's performance as a regulatory board but it would be advantageous for the Redevelopment Board and Select Board to meet to align on policy proposals. Mr. DeCoursey said he agrees with Mr. Curro and that he appreciates the service the Redevelopment Board provides.

Ms. Zsemberly said that she noticed that there seems to be more engagement since the Redevelopment Board started conducting virtual meetings and would like to continue the virtual meeting option when meeting in person is an option. Mr. Diggins said that the Select Board also sees an increase in participation with virtual meetings.

Mr. Hurd introduced the next agenda item and opened the floor for Open Forum.

Patricia Worden 27 Jason St. said as a member of the Housing Policy Implementation Committee they are moving towards the Town Meeting Articles for an affordable housing trust fund and transfer fee but is disappointed that there is no progress towards purchasing existing buildings and renting them to needy people. Arlington is losing a lot of businesses because of violations of the zoning board bylaws. Ms. Worden also said that the Town's open spaces are endangered by the actions of the Redevelopment Board.

Donna Kelly-Williams 110 Mary St. said she is concerned about the number of Mary Street residents that have requested

the plans for Mary Street, Ms. Kelly-Williams said that a majority of the Mary Street residents were opposed to the Shared Streets plan as proposed. Ms. Kelly-Williams said that the residents of Mary Street would like to reach out to Health and Human Services regarding the increased rodent activity in Town and would like a response from the Town.

Mark Kaepplein 11 Palmer Street said that he is offended that the Town Manager made false claims against residents supporting police on the eve of the 9/11 anniversary. Mr. Kaepplein would like the Town to remove banners and adhere to the Town's sign bylaw.

Carl Wagner 30 Edgehill Road said he would like to thank both Boards for the job that they have been doing with everything that the Corona Virus has brought. The Select Board has to notify the Redevelopment Board that the Redevelopment Board must follow the Town bylaws. Mr. Wagner said if small parcels are lost Town density will increase and new apartments will be much more expensive. Mr. Wagner said that the Redevelopment Board, Town Manager, and Planning Department should make the first and most important stakeholders are the Residents. Mr. Wagner said that the Town Manager's statement that Arlington's housing zoning is racist is wrong; Mr. Wagner does not support what was said, and is offended.

Anna Hinken 11 Marion Road said that she does not support the removal of the Black Lives Matter banner from Town Hall. Ms. Hinken said that she feels unsafe in an Arlington that is represented by the comments made in the Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Hinken said that the Town must reject discrimination and hate.

Rebecca Grouber 215 Pleasant St. said she thinks the Town's motivation for the removal of the Black Lives Matter banner was to in some way diminish the tensions in Town regarding the Police and the Lt. Pedrini incident. Ms. Grouber asked the Select Board to reconsider their decision and keep the Black Lives Matter banner hanging.

Don Seltzer Irving Street reviewed his slides regarding the Town's commercial tax base. If Arlington's walkability is lost the whole Town's character is lost. The mixed-use bylaw is not being used properly and small businesses are being closed in favor of apartment buildings.

Michaiah Healy Howard Street said the decision to have the Black Lives Matter banner displayed on Town Hall. Ms. Healy said that as a person of color and a leader in the Town, symbolically the banner on a Town Building signals that her life matters. Ms. Healy said Town Administrative Staff and many in the community are working on our implicit bias and Ms. Healy implores the Board to do the work. Ms. Healy asked why there was a rush in taking the banner down. Consider own reputation as a reason to keep up the sign like Cambridge and Somerville. Ms. Healy said that Arlington does have a problem, a Suffolk University study found that housing discrimination in Arlington is among the highest. Ms. Healy asked the Board to continue to support the Administrative Staff and please use the potential and power that the Select Board has.

Daniel Bromberg 52 Montague St. Mr. Bromberg is new to Arlington and the political process; he is engaging to make Arlington a better place. Black Lives Matter signs challenge people think the level of violence they are impugning on the Black Lives Matter demonstrations to attend a community demonstration. Mr. Bromberg said it is important to keep the banner up at Town Hall and the proposed placard can explain the sign.

Mrs. Mahon asked that Open Forum comments pertain to the current meeting's topics. Ms. Mahon asked that comments regarding other topics be brought to the next Select Board meeting, but of course anyone who would like to comment tonight may.

Nick Stein 28 Clark Street Black Lives Matter is a demand to eliminate white supremacy. Mr. Stein said that racism is alive in Arlington as we have seen with Lt. Pedrini. Mr. Stein said that he implores the Select Board to reconsider taking down the

Black Lives Matter banner.

Jennifer Susse said she, like many residents, is anxious about Arlington's future. Housing that is affordable today will not remain so. Ms. Susse said that Arlington can create affordability by having more units and smaller units; every community has to step up to do our part as we are in a crisis. Ms. Susse said that Arlington is losing age and economic diversity, that the community is becoming wealthier and wealthier. Ms. Susse said to counteract that we should have diversity in housing choices and that the Select Board could be a leader in advocating for more housing.

Laura Kiesel 260 Mass Ave disappointed that Select Board voted to remove the Black Lives Matter banner. The Back the Blue rally is not from Arlington, they organize rallies from town to town. Ms. Kiesel said she does not feel safe in a Town that will not firmly assert that Black Lives Matter. Ms. Kiesel said she speaks to people who do not feel safe to move here, Arlington needs to make housing more equitable.

Mr. Hurd reminded those attending the meeting that this meeting is a joint meeting with the Redevelopment Board to discuss zoning issues. There have been several comments discussing the same subject already this evening and that the Select Board will have another meeting in a few weeks. Mr. Hurd said that there is no limit to what can be said in open forum.

Judith Garber 130 Mass Ave said putting up the Black Lives Matter banner in June was supposed to be the beginning of a long process to tackle structural racism in Arlington. The decision to place a plaque is not the same thing as developing a strategy to for acknowledging the values statement of Black Lives Matter. Ms. Garber said that we have real issues of police accountability and asked the Town to do the right thing even if it is not the easy thing to do.

Mrs. Mahon again reminded meeting participants that this meeting is a joint meeting of the Redevelopment Board and the Select Board and that participants can comment during the next Select Board meeting.

Aisha Cruz 144 Lake Street asked why the Select Board voted to take down the Black Lives Matter banner so soon after the Back the Blue rally. Cannot support the police and support Black Lives Matter because the police do not support Black Lives. Ms. Cruz said that if the representatives of the Town do not want to be viewed as racists they can return Black Lives Matter banner in perpetuity, fire Lt. Pedrini, and defund the Arlington Police Dept.

Erin Ferra Quincy Heights said that taking down the Black Lives Matter banner right after the Back the Blue rally and the defacing of Black Lives Matter signs in our town shows that Arlington is not a supportive of all residents and not welcoming to black and brown citizens. Ms. Ferra implored the Select Board to rethink taking down the Black Lives Matter banner as the banner is a symbolic gesture to rethink how we deal with systemic racism in this town and beyond.

Tom Davison Said as a commissioner of the ACAC supports the work of the Select Board, Redevelopment Board, and the Planning and Community Development Department to develop strategies for affordable housing and commercial business districts. Arlington lost studio space with the ACA move and with the redevelopment of 1165 Mass Ave. Mr. Davison said as we continue to cultivate affordable housing and commercial business opportunities Mr. Davison asked to integrate the principals of creative place-making as part of community development with the goals of supporting artist and attracting and anchoring a diverse culturally rich communities to town. Mr. Davison would like considerations in development of opportunities for live work spaces that attract cultural equity and diversity.

Johnathan Washer 7 Thomas Street voice support of the Black Lives movement and removing the Black Lives Matter banner shortly after the Back the Blue rally and support for Lt. Pedrini. Mr. Washer said that removing the banner is shameful and it

sending the message that Arlington's efforts to support a diverse community is performative at best. The Black Lives Matter banner is a small and harmless message of support for the rest of the town.

John not a member of AFR but support their efforts. Said that Lt. Pedrini's case and the sympathy for him has become a lightning rod for racists in our community, a lot of people have these sentiments. The town wants everyone to get along without showing its commitment to social justice. Does not understand that after the rally for this civil rights movement can take this vote without community input and clearly as response to the Back the Blue rally. It is incredible that after years the Arlington police department has not published a statement denouncing Lt. Pedrini's writings for their racism and advocacy of violence. Agrees with others on the call that the Black Lives Matter banner should be restored.

Mrs. Mahon reminded those attending the virtual meeting that they can reach out to her directly or comment at the next Select Board meeting instead of this joint meeting with the Redevelopment Board.

Colin Pearson 7 Harlow Street addressed Mrs. Mahon and said she was rolling her eyes during statements. Mr. Pearson said that the Redevelopment Board makes the same mistake of not realizing what is in front of you and what is important. Mr. Pearson said that he thinks the Select Board would have voted differently if members of the Select Board attended the peaceful counter protest. Mr. Pearson that the Select Board should have thought about the optics when removing the Black Lives Matter banner.

Steve Revilak 111 Sunnyside Ave. community conversations regarding race and housing and would like to show appreciation for those who put the conversations together. Mr. Revilak said that housing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century boils down to exclusion. Two large farms in Arlington were subdivided into residential neighborhoods and those neighborhoods were originally deeded with racial covenants for whites only. Arlington's Red Line map had no red on it because in 1940 the black population of Arlington was 35 people and just over 100 people by 1970. Mr. Revilak said that in 1973 the Town Meeting passed a bylaw with a moratorium on building apartments for 2 years followed by downgrading the Town's zoning, and voting to reject the Red Line. Mr. Revilak said that he is hoping the Town can address this look at doing this throughout the town, not just narrow corridors of town.

Mike Jacobi Brown 10 Brattle Terrace, a Town Meeting member, felt sad that the Black Lives Matter banner at Town Hall was voted to be taken down. Mr. Brown said he just learned of it yesterday and it was not even in the paper. Mr. Brown said he hopes that the Select Board can wait until we can listen to the impact on the black residents of the town about taking the banner down.

Brad Adams 27 Moss Street wanted to address the removal of the Black Lives Matter banner. Grass roots social justice movement going on for over 100 days. He does not feel it is time to take the Black Lives Matter banner down because he does not think that we have solved it yet. Rally showed up that has roots to the largest anti-Muslim group in the US. This rally was to support the police and the cost was paid out to the police which is a conflict of interest. Taking down the only banner and statement is not what we should be doing right now.

Robin Harney 57 Lake Street said that the Select Board made all marginalized residents of Arlington less safe, particularly black residents, and for this you are complicit in white supremacy. Police and the Black Lives Matter banner are in conflict because we have a deeply racist police department in Arlington. All residents, especially black residents, deserve better than the disrespect you have shown this week. The Banner should stay up and you should start treating black people like their lives actually matter. That begins with acknowledging the problems in the police department.

Kevin Heaton 252 Mass Ave. wanted to share his disappointment with the removal of the Black Lives Matter banner. The

sign needs to stay up and Lt. Pedrini needs to be released.

Shannon Gimerick 38 Lake Hill Ave feels that Arlington has been welcoming. Shannon attended a Select Board meeting as a new resident and was enthused to see the unanimous signing of the bathroom bill. Felt like it was a good choice to be a part of this community. Disappointed that not as welcoming to other parts of community by removing the Black Lives Matter banner. How we can be a more welcoming community for everyone, make it more affordable to live and more diverse.

Martha Vreland 52 Ridgefield Road said she would like to respectfully speak to the Black Lives Matter banner and the police issue. Ms. Vreland said she urges the Select Board not to compare Black Lives Matter movement with the Arlington Police and not give the police the same support. Ms. Vreland said that the Arlington Police Department deserves our respect when they fulfill their duty to serve all residents of Arlington but hate speech promotes violence. New signage cannot replace the Black Lives Matter banner.

Sharon Shealow 8 Ravine Street Select Board tried to quickly get rid of a problem instead of engaging it, which is not good policy. Better process where would have invited feedback could have had a debate and make a better decision. Can't have a housing discussion and want a more diverse community and do things like this at the same time. This is not divorced from housing, a more equitable and diverse community. If the placard inside Town Hall who feels welcome to come in and read it where if you put it outside the whole town is free to read it.

Ezra Fisher 32 Thorndike St. all in favor of focusing on policy but what has changed since June. Mr. Fisher asked if taking the banner down for policy change then what are the changes. If you take down something symbolic to focus on something "real" then you should be able to explain what the policy changes are.

Ben Ruddick 40 Webcowet Rd. exciting to see the Boards come together and talk about housing, everything about our lives gets touched by this. Mr. Ruddick said that it is exciting to see the Select Board excited about housing and that there is a lot of passion in town for positive change.

Mr. Hurd brought the Open Forum to a close and introduced the next agenda item, future joint meeting dates. Mr. Chapdelaine said that he, Ms. Raitt, and the Chair of each Board to determine the date of the next joint meeting.

Mrs. Mahon moved to adjourn for the Select Board, Mr. Diggins seconded for the Select Board, approved 5-0.

Mr. Lau moved to adjourn for the Redevelopment Board, Mr. Watson seconded for the Redevelopment Board, approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.