

**From:** Robin <robinfharney@gmail.com>  
**To:** jrait@town.arlington.ma.us, EBenson@town.arlington.ma.us, KLau@town.arlington.ma.us, DWatson@town.arlington.ma.us, Rachel Zsebery <rzsebery@town.arlington.ma.us>  
**Date:** 03/03/2021 08:28 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Look me in the face and tell me I don't belong in Arlington

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Robin** <[robinfharney@gmail.com](mailto:robinfharney@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 8:26 AM  
Subject: Re: Look me in the face and tell me I don't belong in Arlington  
To: Rachel Zsebery <[RZsebery@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:RZsebery@town.arlington.ma.us)>

Nothing about this was an exaggeration. Being held accountable by the public is part of your job as a government body. If you perceive that as a threat, you are in the wrong job.

And yes, choosing to deny housing to the most needy and instead focus it on people near upper-middle-class status is contributing to the current genocide of poor and disabled people, who are disproportionately people of color.

You can't wish that away with polite words. You can't pretend that your job doesn't have these effects. You only use your power to change it. **By denying that you are responsible for who lives and dies, you are denying your power in a moment when you could use it for good.**

When you show that you do not care whether I or my friends live or die, that impacts my ability to participate in a democratic process that requires I perform politeness. But there is NOTHING POLITE about allowing people to die simply so you can preserve the lily-white homogeneity of this neighborhood. **There is nothing polite about making the conversation too hostile to accommodate those with most at stake.** Especially when you take any accountability as a threat, and have already brought the police into the conversation.

If you believe I'm taking something out of context, please respond by explaining that the entire board fully supports the proposed warrant articles: one to earmark funds for ACTUALLY LOW INCOME people, and the other to increase the proportion of affordable housing per development.

I'd also like to hear about the resignation of the board member who clearly resents disabled people for our inability to work and prioritizes police officers - despite a record of white supremacists and serious use of force offences in our

department - over essential workers with lower pay. I expect to see a full public apology to the entire community.

Otherwise, fuck off and do your damn job. I don't need or want any more gaslighting emails from people who don't care if I drop dead.

On Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 7:43 AM Rachel Zsembery <[RZsembery@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:RZsembery@town.arlington.ma.us)> wrote:

Thank you for your email. It is possible to express disappointment and concern with the Redevelopment Board without accusing the Board of genocide. The comments expressed last night by one of our Board members have clearly been misconstrued and taken out of context. We would like to consider your comments, but it is not helpful to threaten the Board members as a whole, as noted in your postscript.

We do welcome feedback. As a Board, we examine a wide range of development goals within the town, and are committed to a process that we will be starting this spring following Town Meeting to specifically discuss the production and preservation of affordable housing. We hope you will participate in that discussion and contribute to the creation of a plan that will help inform future policies, including warrant articles like the one being discussed Monday night.

Sincerely,

Rachel Zsembery

From: Robin <[robinfarney@gmail.com](mailto:robinfarney@gmail.com)>  
To: [jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us), [EBenson@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:EBenson@town.arlington.ma.us), [KLau@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:KLau@town.arlington.ma.us),  
[DWatson@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:DWatson@town.arlington.ma.us), [rzsembery@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:rzsembery@town.arlington.ma.us)  
Date: Tue, 2 Mar 2021 13:14:26 -0500  
Subject: Look me in the face and tell me I don't belong in Arlington

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I just heard how the redevelopment board received the affordable housing warrant articles and the calls to focus on our most vulnerable community members.

The board said something about wanting housing for the "real working people" who "matter to society" instead, including police.

I am just under the 80% AMI income cutoff that Arlington currently uses for its "affordable" apartments. But in reality, I'm middle class, bordering on upper-middle. The fact that Arlington treats me like the poorest person who deserves to live here is classism, plain and simple.

But no, it's more than that.

Arlington is almost 90% white. The income levels in this town are not representative of those in communities of color. My BIPOC friends are running GoFundMes for rent and moving expenses. Arlington talks about valuing diversity, but this is your chance to support changes that will make a material difference. The fact that you consider police welfare over the lives of people of color: it's racism, plain and simple.

But no, it's more than that.

I am a chronically ill person living on Social Security Disability. Unlike most disability recipients, I am married to a spouse who works. All of my disabled friends are living in extreme poverty through no fault of their own. Those who did not work enough before becoming disabled are prohibited from possessing more than \$2000, ever, or they lose all of their income and healthcare. These are people I love. **They cannot afford market-rate rent and they are not allowed to have someone pay it for them.** The fact that they - and by extension, I - don't matter to you is ableism, plain and simple.

But no, it's more than that.

I am a transgender man. I look trans. I get harassed when I walk down the street, and when I use the internet. I need to take steps to disguise my full name when speaking publicly, because I have received death and doxxing threats and had my information released to right wing extremists. What does this have to do with housing? Trans people, on average, are dirt poor. My entire community is poor. Because of job and housing discrimination, because of PTSD from the violence we experience growing up, because we've developed disabilities as the result of stress, because of medical debt, because of being disowned by our families, because we lost everything we have escaping one abusive situation after another. And because we choose low-paying jobs like education, social work, and nonprofits, because we want to make sure no one else goes through what we did. We are here. Lots of us. And you not seeing us, not wanting to help us? It's homophobia and transphobia, plain and simple.

But wait, it's more than that.

We are living through a global pandemic that disproportionately affects the poorest and most medically vulnerable. We are facing an eviction crisis on a scale larger than ever before. Housing is healthcare. Housing is life saving. Housing will prevent virus transmission to those who would die should they be infected. And your refusal to help the people who need it?

**It's genocide, plain and simple.**

SO DO YOUR GODDAMN JOBS.

P.S. We will hold you accountable.