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Subject: Support of Article 45

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Dear Redevelopment Board Members,

I'm writing in support of Article 45, to increase the percentage of affordable housing units in new private developments from 15% to 25%. I'm in favor of this article because there is an immense need for more affordable housing in Arlington, and Covid-19 has made this need even more urgent. Amending our inclusionary zoning rate is one of many ways we can help increase the amount of affordable housing in town.

Just looking at our rate of affordable housing compared to towns around us, it is obvious we are far behind. The redevelopment board has been doing a lot of work to increase affordable units, yet from 2001 to 2018 Arlington only increased its subsidized housing inventory percentage by 0.1%. Housing affordability is an emergency and it's clear we need to do more to reach **our goal of 10% affordability**.

I'm concerned for myself and my neighbors that if rents continue to rise, that myself and others won't be able to stay here. This has been part of my conversation for a couple years now as a looming inevitability. I have lived in Arlington for the past 7 years and work here as well. I live with two roommates and I am middle aged at age 55. I pay 20% of my income as a full time Registered Nurse on rent (not including utilities). If I lived on my own then I would be paying the recommended 30% of my income to rent a studio or a one bedroom that tend not to be very nice. I would need to pay 40 to 50% of my income on rent (not mortgage) in order to rent good quality housing. I looked into home ownership in Arlington and I was told by a broker that I would need to look into other towns for what I can afford at 200k. I can't imagine working as a home health aide or other jobs which pay substantially less and being able to afford housing. I view it as a serious crisis. I also don't feel that a homogenous town of only wealthy people is good for the town. I think Arlington can do better.

Back in June of last year, the town pledged to work on rooting out systemic racism in all areas, including housing. In the absence of regulations of rental prices, increasing the availability of affordable housing stock is one way to ensure greater economic and racial diversity in our town. Without meaningful affordable housing, market-rate housing is set at prices that are exclusionary to most Black and brown people, as well as those populations more likely to live on fixed incomes or rely on housing vouchers, such as people with disabilities. If our goal is to make Arlington a place for people of all backgrounds and abilities, we need to make housing more affordable.

Thank you,  
Shelley Schou

Sent from my iPhone