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Subject: Redevelopment Board Meeting

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Kristin Martin and I have lived in Arlington for my whole life (36 years to date). I have lived them in the same house I grew up in. I still live at home because I cannot afford to live on my own yet. I have a bachelor's degree and I work full time as a graphic designer/social media manager. I have also lived through two recessions in my adulthood and have health issues that qualify me as a disabled person. You wouldn't know it by looking at me though. I have an auto-immune disease and need to live near family, which for me is Arlington. It's also where most of my doctors are. I know the argument for if you can't afford to live here is to simply move, but it's not that simple for reasons I have explained. I need my family and I need my doctors. I could afford to live in Dorchester possibly but that kicks a lifelong Dorchester person out if they can't afford it, thus gentrifying. I don't want to add to the problem.

Affordable housing will always be needed. I don't want to go on the list for section 8 or a voucher, and take someone's spot who really needs it. Plus that list is about 6-8 years long. I know that because I helped a disabled female navigate that system. If it wasn't for me doing her paperwork, she would be on the street. It makes me wonder how many invisible homeless people we have in town, people who couch surf, who live with someone rent free, but if we pulled that safety net away from there we would see them on the street where people face mental health issues, addiction, and suicide. I used to judge homeless people I saw too, I am ashamed to say, but now I realize they are no different than me. I was just fortunate enough to have a family to fall back on and doctors to keep me safe. Many homeless people also work, something I did not know. I can't imagine living on the streets and not having an addiction issue. Did you know it takes you [20 years](#) to get out of poverty if you're able to get out of it? I did not know that either.

This is why we will always need affordable housing. My most recent job I had three titles: graphic designer, social media manager, and marketing associate. I worked long hours without overtime pay because most places do not offer that but expect you to work 60 hours a week or more. I made \$57,000 (before taxes) a year. If we follow the [30% rent rule](#), my monthly rent should be \$1450, but that doesn't take in account taxes or the fact that I cannot find a one bedroom apartment in Arlington for \$1450. I did notice during the pandemic a few studios around that price, but I did not look into them to see if they were scams or not. This comes to the next suggestion that I should get a different job. I think after spending as much as I did on my first degree, I shouldn't have to spend more on another. Being a graphic designer allows for some flexibility to work from home when I experience flare ups in my health. It allows me to still work full time.

The affordable housing 1/6 rule gets property owners out of having tenants like me. I live in East Arlington in a two family. Luckily, it's family owned so I live here rent free. But I would like to live on my own and feel successful. I would love to see more affordable options in town between \$1100-\$1300. I knew as soon as the first house on my street went for one million dollars, even my shabby street was no longer affordable. I get it in a way, I am near the city, near the T, near major highways. But don't you think people who work really hard that don't make six figures need access to these things as well?

I remember how non-diverse Arlington was growing up. We didn't have the restaurants that we now do in the center. We did not have the artsy stores, or the art on the bike path. Without diversity, Arlington would be just as boring as it was growing up. There was nothing to do and I wonder if that's part of why so many young people got into drugs. Now there's a chance to change our rules and allow people to actually live here. We need to do better because it's the right thing to do.

Thank you,

||| Kristin Martin