

Dear Town Meeting members,

I am writing on the cusp of a momentous vote to urge caution and to reiterate that I do not believe the MBTA overlay will create the affordable housing that some vociferously insist it will deliver.

I grew up in Brighton and have seen how the demolition and condoization of my childhood neighborhood has driven up prices for everyone (many times over), while making the neighborhood an extremely difficult place to live and, in particular, to raise children in.

While nobody can know what will be built, or how quickly (there is apparently no mechanism to control this in the law either), the law contains no mechanisms for encouraging the affordable units we strive to incorporate in Arlington via our bylaws.

We do know that it will absolutely displace a large number of people in older buildings targeted for tear downs, which contain units that rent for much less than the new ones will, and which currently house many of our lower income residents. We also know that there will be environmental consequences for our town and increased fiscal dysfunction as well. To accept this in exchange for the potential that a mere 10% of new units will be “affordable” with higher rents than are currently allowed under our bylaws is troublesome indeed.

In addition, it seems counter to democratic values to vote on the largest changes to the Town in decades when the vast majority of residents are completely unaware of what is being proposed.

At this point in time, I urge you to vote YES to amendments by: Andersen, Evans, Wagner, Worden, Babiarz, Loreti, and Lane.

These amendments seek to prevent the Mass Ave and Broadway heights limits from extending into the neighborhoods, protect our robust affordability requirements, remove bonuses that reward developers for doing less than what our bylaws would have required in terms of affordability (and will once again require if the state approves or application), protect open space, avoid development on steep hills in the Heights neighborhoods, set more reasonable

setbacks, mitigate radical zero setbacks, incentivize more commercial use, and give us the opportunity to stop and gauge how development is affecting the town as the state's target is met.

If Article 12 is not amended significantly to make it fit the size and nature of our Town, OR if the Bagnall amendment to reinstate four story heights in the neighborhoods should be passed, then I urge you to vote NO vote on Article 12.

The state deadline for this process is late 2024.

Joanne Cullinane, 69 Newland Rd