

DATE: March 18, 2019

TO: The Arlington Redevelopment Board

RE: Proposed Zoning Changes Articles 6- 14

FROM: Stephen McKenna, 4 Upland Road, Arlington, MA

Zoning is very technical and strategic. It is an integral part of the economic growth and future of Arlington and the Planning Department has put forth proposed zoning articles that will guide the Town of Arlington through the proper growth the town needs and that will be done in a sensitive and responsible way. If we cannot redevelop and revitalize our main corridors such as Mass Avenue, Broadway and Summer Street; then where?

This will generate much needed income for the town and will substantially help absorb the costs needed to rebuild our high school and other infrastructures throughout the town. Otherwise, we will all see continued and substantial increases in our taxes. Our aging population that own homes in town are already feeling the pressure of tax increases. Are we really going to continue to place the burden on every home owner?

The proposed zoning by law changes do the following:

- 1. Creates newer business opportunities**
- 2. Creates growth for existing businesses in town**
- 3. Creates much needed housing stock**
- 4. Creates newer housing stock built to today's standards, providing safer and more modern housing**
- 5. Creates more housing for our aging population that wants to downsize and stay in town**
- 6. Creates more needed affordable housing units**
- 7. Creates more income for the town**

These proposed zoning changes are critical to the revitalization of Arlington as well as the continued economic growth and prosperity of our town. It will provide sensitive development opportunities for older, functionally obsolete properties along our main corridors allowing them to become more relevant and meet demands of our local businesses as well as the lifestyle needs for the citizens of Arlington.

Most of the properties along Mass Ave and Broadway were built prior to the 1930's and it's time to rejuvenate these properties and the proposed zoning by laws will allow that to happen. Much of our retail and mixed use properties are so small and older that businesses cannot thrive. Most of our vacant store fronts are older, smaller spaces that do not meet the requirements for new businesses that want to come into Arlington, but don't because the space does not exist. We need vibrant, new spaces developed in town to generate successful long standing businesses.

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Arlington only needs to look to our neighbors in Lexington when years ago they realized the need for new and functional mixed use development. Lexington Center has not lost its character or sense of history and businesses are thriving. Long term residents moved out of their larger homes and into residential housing in the center, supporting local businesses and the community.

Belmont is in the midst of many new development opportunities creating more housing, retail and office space meeting the demands of the community. By allowing new zoning changes, Lexington and Belmont created much needed tax income to support town services. Arlington needs to vote and approve these zoning changes so we can stay competitive and relevant in order to sustain our long term viability.

Approving these zoning changes will provide more housing for our aging population and generate much needed housing for multiple types of households that will not overburdened our schools. It will also provide more affordable housing as required in our zoning by laws.

These proposed zoning changes are not random acts to destroy the fiber of our town. They are well thought out, specific, and reasonable plans as researched and determined by our Planning Department to better the community. These proposed zoning changes will not create a wall of darkness as some have described. They are sensitive to its neighbors and neighborhoods.

New development will not be steam rolled as some have stated. Each development opportunity will require a hearing and will need to meet all of the specific zoning requirements and will require approval from the ARB.

Finally, Arlington is surrounded by major universities, hospitals, hi tech and bio tech industries. We are located in the hub of an area full of growth and prosperity and we are surrounded by towns that have recognized it and have made similar changes to strengthen and better their communities.

The Arlington Planning Department knows the importance of these changes and they have spent countless hours researching and determining how critical the revitalization of our main corridors are to Arlington's future. The Planning Department is filled with dedicated people serving our community. They are highly educated and trained professionals with degrees in planning and urban development and I think it's time we trust them and let them do the jobs they were hired to do.

Respectfully,

Stephen McKenna
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