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Date: Mon, 18 Mar 2019 15:22:00 -0400
Subject: Re: Testimony for ARB Density Zoning Amendments

Patricia

Thank you for your comments.

Best,
Jenny

Jennifer Raitt
Director of Planning and Community Development
781-316-3092

On Mar 18, 2019, at 2:34 PM, Patricia Worden <pbworden@hotmail.com> wrote:

Please enter the following into the record for March 11 Arlington Redevelopment Board hearing on zoning amendments

Please acknowledge receipt

Testimony of Patricia B. Worden regarding ARB Hearing on Density Articles

Please find in boldface below an exact transcript of the oral testimony I gave at the ARB Hearing on March 11, 2019. But prior to that please include in your record the following observations: Several individuals testified at the hearing who identified themselves as Housing Plan Implementation Committee members (of which I am a member but decided it would be inappropriate to state that in my oral presentation). The relevance and propriety of the HPIC membership in the context of ARB Hearings on zoning density amendments in the warrant is questionable. The Committee has apparently been in existence since 2017. But the membership during that time is not clear. The first meeting of the current Committee was on February 4, 2019 and the density articles have never been discussed by its members. There are only two sets of minutes for the HPIC during the two years during which it has allegedly been in existence. This makes it difficult, if not impossible to know what has been discussed and by whom. Transparency is lacking.

Patricia B. Worden

Oral Testimony of Patricia Barron Worden, Ph.D. at ARB Hearing March 11, 2019

The only kind of housing Arlington need is affordable housing. That's not just my opinion – you will see it in the housing recommendation in the Master Plan which I have handed out.—pages 88-89. There is nothing in these articles which requires affordable housing. In fact they would do the opposite. The claim that we need more diversity and so need more housing is also the opposite of what the MP says which is on page 77 and – I quote – you can see it on your cell phones –“Arlington is unique among Boston's inner suburbs for its diverse housing stock.” There is nothing in the MP indicating that affordable housing requires decrease in Usable open space or increase in density.

These ARB-MAPC density articles are a dream for developers. If approved by TM they will be a disaster for Arlington residents and businesses who are renting. 39% of dwelling units in Arlington are rentals. That is a very high number compared to other nearby towns. Our Town leaders need to protect the rights and housing stability of this group not exploit them for developers. 40% of Arlington renters pay less than \$1,500 per month in Arlington's housing pool for rent. That is even less than the rent for inclusionary units which is \$1,647 for a 2 bedroom unit. The going rent for new 2-bdroom units is about \$3,000. The shock for Arlington renters would be palpable and many would have to leave or would be evicted as is happening in Boston with its push for density and luxury units. People who can't afford the rent increases are being evicted in Boston at the rate of 43 per day according to the Boston Sunday Globe Magazine of February 24. Ironically many of the luxury units are unoccupied.

There is no way that any inclusionary zoning or density bonus is going to accommodate the many market rate renters who are likely to be unable to afford the higher rents coming with this density gentrification. One must remember that 80% of Arlington renters are currently paying less than \$1,999 per year for Arlington's reasonable market rate units.

Raising rents for Arlington' businesses is going to result in a loss of these and with them the tax revenue which they produce. Replacing them with housing is going to bring large infrastructure and school costs. The rush to fill up every available space with crammed luxury apartments making street walls of buildings like the one at 887 Massachusetts Avenue at Arlington High School is going to remove our opportunities for attracting commercial and entrepreneurial businesses.

The Master Plan is also very clear about the importance of Usable open space. These ARB amendments are brutal in their Zero requirement for open space which is the absolute opposite of many statements in the MP. Page 34 of the Master Plan states *“Usable open space in the village centers is*

critical. This can take place on individual lots (such as dining terraces, forecourts, etc.) and collective spaces such as plazas, commons, greens, and pocket parks. These usable open spaces are a significant draw to the districts...”- page 34

When the ARB consultant was asked if children at these new mixed use buildings with no open space would have to play on the sidewalk. The consultant said – No- they would play in the park. When she was asked to name a park she said they would play on the Minuteman Bikeway.

This desire for usable open space became very clear to me when attending the meetings for the Master Plan – I believe I attended all of them. The outstanding Arlington site which attendees frequently brought up – the Walgreen’s site in East Arlington was one which residents for all over Arlington had hopes for. If the structure on that site were at the sides and not the rear then there would be a view from Massachusetts Avenue of our lovely Spy Pond – what many envisioned was opening up that view with structures at the sides of the lot including ground floor indoor and outdoor dining facilities and some enhancing lawn and trees and planters. But what the ARB consultants have come up with for that site if it is ever available is zoning that bring us - you can probably find it in their buildout – a monstrous humongous building Maxed out in every dimension and looming over the Avenue completely blocking any view of Spy Pond for all Arlingtonians except for the occupants of the luxury units.

This is a perfect example of awful Plans MAPC wants to bring to us.

Please don’t let them do it to Arlington.

Patricia Barron Worden, Ph.D.

former Member and Chair, Arlington School Committee

former member and Chair, Arlington Housing Authority

former Charter Member, Arlington Human Rights Commission

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8

<pbw testimony for ARB hrgs March 2019.doc>