

Memorandum to the Redevelopment Board

**Written Testimony of John L. Worden III regarding Zoning Articles
in the Warrant for the 2019 Annual Town Meeting**

6, 7, 8, and 9: If there is anything more lacking than affordable housing in Arlington, it is open space. Articles 6 through 9 seem designed to further reduce the small amounts of open space now required for buildings, and do nothing to increase affordable housing possibilities. In both of these respects, these articles are inconsistent with the goals of the Master Plan to preserve open space and increase affordable housing.

Counting roofs and balconies as open space is absurd. This exception, combined with the elimination of the usable open space requirement, effectively halves the amount of open space needed for townhouses in the R4 and R5 zoning districts. Indeed the reduction of lot sizes to the ridiculous level of 5,000 feet will give developers the perfect excuse to do 5 unit buildings, so nothing affordable will be required.

In addition, promoting the conversion of one and two family homes in the B1 zoning district to mixed uses up to 45 feet and 4 stories high is entirely inconsistent with the historical goal of maintaining these structures in the form of one and two family homes as they were constructed. For these four articles, the recommendations of the ARB should be **no action**.

10: This is just a giveaway to developers: add a storey and require the set back at that level, instead of the level below. The setbacks should be on all elevations of the building, and I may make an amendment at Town Meeting to achieve this slightly preferable result.

11: Reducing the buffer areas is a really bad idea, unfair to neighbors who live in abutting houses. One of the members of Arlington Residents for Responsible Redevelopment has done shadow studies showing that the combination of increased height and reduced buffer will greatly increase the shadowing of neighboring houses. Obviously, MAPC and/or CHAPA should have done such studies before proposing such a drastic change; if they failed or were afraid to do so, it shows an incredibly insensitive and arrogant attitude towards the people of Arlington who happen to live near the target zones. This should be recommended for **no action**.

12: Making it clear that there are two “front yards” which is the case in residential zones is sound, particularly if the front yards are not reduced. However, there should be added to the proposed language the following: *provided that such setbacks shall not be less than the average set backs on the block adjoining the corner lot*. If such language is not in the recommended vote, I will move an amendment at Town Meeting in order to achieve that result. As pointed out at the public hearing, it’s one thing to have a one story building on the corner of a residential street, and quite another to have a five-story one.

13: This seems unnecessary, since under Article 14, if approved, the special permit granting authority can effectuate a reduction where, and to the extent appropriate. Where

the average Arlington household has 1.8 cars (the Planning Dept. said 1.4 but that doesn't seem to line up with the numbers). It seems to me that you have to provide for that .8 or .4 car somewhere, and there should also be spaces for guests, etc.

14: If required parking is to be reduced (which will add to the pressure for on-street parking), there should be some percentage or minimum number of “fly-wheel” spaces for occasional over night guests, deliveries, repair men, and the like. Part of the program should be the institution of a system of utilizing the excess parking places, e.g. those revealed in the cherry-picked half dozen parking lots in the report presented at the hearing.

15: If you should, against the recommendation of the Residential Study Committee, and two previous Town Meetings, go ahead with accessory apartments, the present proposal should be amended in several respects:

1. The house envelope must be defined as what existed as of February 14, 2019
2. The unit must be affordable.
3. The lease must be for a minimum of one year.
4. No additional parking place will be required, as long as the tenant's vehicle can be accommodated on the premises.
5. If the premises is sold, the new owner must apply for a new permit, should a Continuation of the apartment be desired.
6. A condition of the permit must be that any employee of the Inspectional Services Dept. or the Planning & Community Development Dept. may have full access to inspect the premises for conformity with the permit, upon 24 hours notice, without the necessity of a warrant or court order.
7. If the terms of the permit are violated, the permit will *ipso facto* expire, and the accessory unit removed.

If the substance of such conditions is not included in the recommended vote, I will file an amendment to add them. The preferable recommendation on the Article is **no action**.

16: The concept is good, but it doesn't go far enough; change *0 to 5* to *0 to 4* and change *6 to 19* to *5 to 19* and add, after 15% affordable units, (*minimum of one*)

24 and 25: I endorse these Articles as necessary and logical changes.

Thank you for considering my thoughts. Kindly include this in the records of your hearings.

John L. Worden III
Town Meeting Member, Precinct. 8

March 20, 2019