

To: The Arlington Redevelopment Board: Members and Staff  
From: Patricia Deal, 9 Ronald Road, Arlington  
Date: March 25, 2019  
Subject: Proposed Amendments to Arlington Zoning Bylaw

I have appreciated the opportunity to attend the prior two ARB hearings on the proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments, and to speak at the March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. I am sending along this summary of my key points and some additional thoughts.

1. It appears that the proposed amendments were not available for public review until February 14, 2019. Given the scope and scale of these changes, the time allowed for review – by Arlington citizens and Town Meeting members is insufficient. I suggest that the articles do not go forward in the 2019 Town Meeting and, as the City of Newton has recently done, the zoning changes be postponed until members of the Arlington community can be made aware of these changes and understand the impact they will have on the quality of life in our Town.
2. It is clear that the changes were the product of outside consultants and not from any grassroots plan. They are “cookie cutter” and could apply to any city or town where the agenda is to promote greater density. This is very unfair to Arlington citizens. My family moved to Arlington in 1955 and in that time I have never heard any resident say that we aspire to have Arlington have the density of a city.
3. I believe that you are hiding behind the Master Plan and using it as a shield from public opinion. The plan reflects many well-meaning goals – some of which are contradictory but the reduction of setbacks, the loss of open space and higher buildings in the “commercial corridor” are not specified. It would also be a concern if the ARB were to forfeit its role of review and permitting to default to an “permitted by right” approach.
4. If the goal is affordable housing, this is a very circuitous route to achieving that. We have a planning department as your governmental partner. Why are we not taking a direct approach to resolving this as appears to be happening in the planned Lowell and Park Street intersection. The drip, drip approach of negotiating for one or two units at a time will never get us there and is basically a give away to developers who really want to only build market rate units. In reading through the Bylaw amendments, my first thought was: The ARB is putting Arlington up “For Sale”, and doing so without most of our residents even knowing this is happening.
5. People live in the housing currently in the R 4 to R 7 districts, some of whom are economically vulnerable. These changes reflect an elitism that I am disappointed to encounter in my town. The majority of those preparing and voting on the proposed amendments live in R0 – R3 districts. How presumptuous to determine what is best for our fellow citizens as long as it is “Not In My Backyard.” We should be more concerned about preserving the affordable housing we currently have rather than selling the illusion that a unit here or there will make a difference.
6. As for vibrancy. In my memory, the most vibrancy in Arlington in recent decades came from a citizen initiative to expand our beer and wine and liquor licenses, making Arlington a dining destination. Now that was creative thinking something that these proposed amendments clearly lack. I suggest that you roll up your sleeves and work with the real people in the community to see if you can arrive at some really practical solutions. Your job is to represent the best interests of the people of Arlington and not the agenda of outside consultant groups.

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