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Date: Wed, 27 Mar 2019 09:34:51 -0400
Subject: Re: Rezoning Articles Require Further Study

Forrest,

Thank you for your comments.

Best,
Jenny

Jennifer Raitt
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Date: Wed, 27 Mar 2019 09:27:46 -0400
Subject: Rezoning Articles Require Further Study

To the Members of the Arlington Redevelopment Board,

I have attended two of your meetings concerned with changing zoning to allow greater density. As written, these articles are short-sighted and not in Arlington's best interest. Please reject the rezoning articles at this time, so that further study and consideration may be given.

In particular, I am most concerned that the articles have been rushed through a process which has provided little time for Arlingtonians to understand the article's potential impacts. In general, the citizenry has no knowledge or understanding of these articles. To pass something that will have such a large impact on the Town without public scrutiny fails any test of good governance.

If affordability is the major issue, it should be addressed directly, not through zoning changes that depend on a developer's goodwill. At the very least, changes in zoning should not allow any loopholes. Simply, if a developer wants to build in Arlington, they must also add to the affordable housing stock. Period.

I would point out that developers are doing a fine job of mucking up Arlington under the existing zoning regulations. Under them, one need look no further than 887 Massachusetts Avenue. This building with its flat, banal, facade has minimal setbacks and actually detracts from the aesthetic interest of the streetscape. Its apartments are unaffordable by the great majority of Arlington renters. Similarly, the building's mixed-use retails space sits empty and unused. Frankly, it's an embarrassment that such a thing could be built in Arlington. The changes to zoning would allow, indeed encourage, worse building.

In addition, Greenspace has been a top priority for Arlington's public for a long time. The zoning articles as written actually eliminate much desired greenspace and will make Arlington less attractive and poorer recreationally.

The article to allow Accessory Dwelling Units is misguided at best. Again, the general impetuous for denser, smaller, affordable housing may be a good one, but this current article does not adequately help address that issue.

Finally, I would like to see the impetuous for greater urban density, population diversity, and affordable housing come from townspeople, not outside interests.

Sincerely,

Forrest Snyder

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