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Date: Wed, 27 Mar 2019 13:02:35 -0400
Subject: Re: Proposed amendments / changes to Pro-urbanization articles, Art 16 etc

Carl,

Thank you for your comments.

Best,
Jenny

Jennifer Raitt
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Town of Arlington
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Date: Wed, 27 Mar 2019 15:52:25 +0000
Subject: Proposed amendments / changes to Pro-urbanization articles, Art 16 etc

Dear Members of the ARB:
cc: Town Manager, Dir of Planning, Select Board via Ms. Krepelka

I have heard that the proponents of the pro-density/urbanization articles before you may have articles that reference 'density bonus', and other changes to push large development with some reference to affordability.

I'd first point out the Articles as submitted to you are completely lacking in affordability assistance - and the combination of reducing amount of lot space required per unit **to 1,000 sq ft per unit** and proposed division of **lot size down to only 5,000 sq ft** would allow developers to avoid Arlington's existing affordable apartment "inclusionary zoning" requirements - **because these existing protections begin at the 6th unit.**

For this reason, while I support Mr Revilak's notion of increasing the inclusionary affordable unit level from 15% to 20%, **his article would not stop the detrimental effect to affordable unit requirements in these articles.**

Any proposed amendment to these articles that the proponents cast as "affordable" should first pass a test that it would create more actual units of affordable housing than now - and when developers exploit these proposed removals of our bylaw protections maximally. So, there should never be a 'bonus' or a way for developers to produce less affordable unit numbers, such as the proposed articles allow for 4 and 5 unit placements per lot.

We should put these pro-urbanization/pro-density Articles off until you and the town's population have had a decent amount of time to review them, instead of pushing them. Town Meeting Members should have more time to decide and inform themselves about these Articles before they - 250 people - decide the fate of a town we love for its open spaces, its current density (already 2nd in the Commonwealth), its school capacity, its height and shade. We don't love how close we live to our neighbors -- so we also certainly don't want that any worse!

There is a larger issue here: The residents (renters and owners) and businesses have not been adequately consulted before these Articles were proposed and crafted. The proponents have failed to remember that the people who live and work in Arlington are the most important stakeholders - and whom these officials are paid by. Instead, it has been very troubling to see MAPC, CHAPA, and MMC - all outside organizations - active in creating these Articles, and attaching the untrue notions that they somehow help us with our affordability and property tax bill issues -- both of which we show are not the case on the website www.arfrr.org

The reason that the tax-payers are concerned about the way the ARB is constituted (currently appointed by unelected officials) is because of this concern over these Articles. I therefore ask you to vote against all of the Articles and any amendment that would not actually create higher numbers of affordable units per development and across our town.

Carl Wagner