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Envision Arlington Committee
730 Massachusetts Ave.
Arlington, MA 02476

To Whom It May Concern,

This is a letter to express my interest in serving on the Envision Arlington Committee. I have long admired the Committee's mission of actively working to engage the community and solicit the community's input on a variety of fronts.

My own involvement with town politics started with the Build Arlington's Future campaign in 2016, for which I was a captain for precinct 7, a role I reprised in 2019. I was elected to Town Meeting in 2017 and just re-elected this past spring (though to no opposition). As a parent of a child in the school system coming out of a school debt exclusion campaign, I started squarely in the "parents concerned with the schools" caucus of town meeting. During the lead up to the 2019 Town Meeting, I attended one session on the zoning articles led by Erin Zwirko and co-hosted a general precinct meeting (with encouragement and facilitation from Envision) to discuss the upcoming warrants with community members. I was new to zoning questions and both those sessions were quite eye-opening in hearing the vehement opposition to a little more housing raised by some community members. Over the following summer I read *The Color of Law* and began to make an active effort to educate myself on this issue. In the fall I was invited to join the Equitable Arlington group and get further into these discussions with some like-minded people. I also continued my own education by reading *Dream Hoarders*, *Segregation by Design*, *Neighborhood Defenders* and a variety of academic papers. I spent a few hours in the Envision booth last Town Day engaging in housing discussions and getting people to register their opinion on our housing challenges.

One of the things that has drawn me into town politics is that the issues are concrete and immediate. I have always thought of Arlington as a progressive town that was continually looking for ways to improve the town and make its residents' lives better. With zoning, the more I read, the more I realized that our town zoning bylaws were quietly making inequality worse along both race and class lines. While many of society's issues with race and class seem huge and intractable, zoning one seems like one area where we can make meaningful improvements.

I recognize that town action alone isn't going to solve the housing crisis, but think, like Niebuhr, that we need the courage to change the things we can. I think sentiment is moving in the direction but it is going to take a lot of community engagement and discussion to educate people on the issue and develop solutions suitable to the town. The problem has been 50 years in the making and it won't get solved overnight.

On non-housing fronts, my wife Cristin (chair of ACAC and on the Economic Recovery Task Force) and I went around to local businesses to encourage them to apply for assistance from the town as part of the Amazing Arlington effort. I think we drummed up a few applications and made a few businesses feel like the town really did care about them. Though neighbors have now taken the lead, I helped organize our first several block

parties, which include my grilled stuffed flatbread that is famous on Wyman Street from Mass Ave to Broadway. I also spent a few years helping coach youth soccer.

Thank you for inviting me to apply and for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Bagnall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alex" written in a large, sweeping script, and the last name "Bagnall" written in a more compact, cursive style.

Alexander Bagnall