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Subject: GET NINE AFFORDABLE UNITS-A BETTER CHOICE

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Memorandum to Select Board and Adam Chapdelaine

Date - 10-25-21

Please list as Correspondence Received by Select Board

Subject: Get Nine Affordable Units – a Better Choice

Dear Mr. DeCoursey, Members of the Board and Mr. Adam Chapdelaine,

Re: Item 2 of the Planning Director's

"Recommendation for Affordable Housing Preservation and Development," listed on page 74 of your Agenda for tonight.

The suggestion that millions of dollars of ARPA funds should be used to subsidize and "buy down" new affordable units in 40B or other projects involving new construction is much more expensive than purchasing existing units for renovation and use as affordable units including "deeply affordable" units. It is profligate and extremely wasteful. It is unnecessary since we are close to or have already reached statutory requirement for "safe harbor" from 40B (the 1.5 % area requirement). It is likely to exacerbate the already huge exploitative developer interest in 40B projects in Arlington and certain 40B-supportive Arlington housing group members. 40B projects with their increases in density and gentrification, will rapidly escalate school costs, looming multi-million dollar overrides, environmental degradation. This is antithetical to Arlington's exemplary dedicated efforts and expense to increase and maintain affordable units while protecting Arlington against the exploitation and damage inherent to 40B construction.

ARPA funds should be a Godsend and should be wisely spent. It is not appropriate to just throw money at 40B projects and claim you are doing the best for affordability. That is wrong. In the past, prior to difficult maintenance expenses, AHA was able to afford to buy some condominiums and supply existing housing for tenants, disabled adults and families and encouraged HCA do to so also, helping them with renovation to help them get established after a long hiatus. The Town should use the ARPA funds to enable such purchases and leveraging of such funds NOW.

<https://www.gibsonsothebysrealty.com/listing/72907718/77-79-mystic-street-arlington-ma-02474/>

I ask you all to consider as a paradigm the above link for a recent listing of existing real estate of well built convenient units that could serve our affordability and "deep affordability" needs much better than subsidizing 40B developments. The cost of these units would be slightly less than \$400,000 each as compared to the

figures of \$600,000- \$750,000 frequently cited for new unit construction. (It would not serve mainly to increase the fortunes of chosen 40B developers or satisfy the demands of Metropolitan Area Planning Council of which the Town Manager and Planning Director are leaders.) The purchase of units such as these would be wise, thoughtful, and admirable. It would be a much better use of \$3,000,000+ million than subsidizing 40B units.

Respectfully,

Patricia Barron Worden