

From: Patricia Worden

Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 12:07 AM

To: Jim Feeney; Eric Helmuth; Ashley Maher; John Hurd; Stephen DeCoursey; Diane Mahon; Len Diggins; Rachel Zsembery; Kin Lau; Stephen Revilak; Eugene Benson; Claire Ricker

Subject: testimony for ARB Public Hearing 9-11

September 10, 2023

Testimony for ARB Public Hearing on Warrant Article for Fall 2023 STM

(please include this testimony in Correspondence Received for ARB Hearing on 9/11)

Dear Members of the Arlington Redevelopment Board, Arlington Select Board, Mr. Feeney, and Ms. Ricker,

It has been difficult to determine how best to protect the Town from the obvious dangers and conflicts, intended or unintended, being attempted by the MBTA Communities Working Group. The problem is made worse by the curious decision of The Select Board to open the warrant for filing of articles (for Special Town Meeting of October 17) for only a few hours on September 11 and to close the warrant on that date PRIOR to the Arlington Redevelopment Board publicizing or even discussing their proposed ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT/MBTACOMMUNITIES OVERLAY DISTRICT (for inclusion in the warrant for the vote of Town Meeting at STM) later that evening. The ARB will not make public their proposed STM article until October 2. Those chosen dates of the SB and ARB respectively obviously make it impossible to study and analyze the ARB decision in time to create and file a comprehensive protective competing article if necessary and leaves three options:

1. Trust that the ARB may draft an article that adheres essentially to the state regulations' requirement of 2, 046 units on 32 acres rather than the 6,000 to 15,000 units on as much as 176 acres desired by the MBTAC Working Group. The WG is dominated by developers and architects. This WG goal would be extremely destabilizing for the community causing rampant speculation by developers. They would outbid family homeseekers for houses and eventually demolish them - even if historic (which the WG promised to exempt but failed to do so), and clear-cut trees to build luxury multimillion dollar condo units with zero open space requirements creating dangerous heat

- islands. With bonuses, heights of these condo units on Mass. Av. could reach almost 80 feet with no front setback creating street walls and canyons. We would need to design amendments or substitute motions at TM to attempt to reduce any such outrageous over-reach and remove objectionable features, if any, of the ARB amendment.
2. File an article (or articles) for TM prematurely (since articles would have to be filed prior to the ARB choosing to reveal its plans) perhaps achieving reductions of only a few hundred or a couple of thousand unit density capacity from the more than 7,000 units desired by the WG.
 3. If the ARB's amendment article shows completely unacceptable increase in dense gentrification then encourage rejection by a NO vote of Town Meeting and thereby force ARB to come back with a better article (deadline is late 2024). They have plenty of time to do so and the SB can call for STM whenever they like. (This could have the environmental advantage of a larger community such as Somerville being enabled to take our place in the Fossil Fuel experiment.)

Given the difficult time frame established by the Select Board and ARB, members of Arlington Residents For Responsible Redevelopment will likely proceed with the first option by planning amendments if necessary to what the ARB eventually presents as their article for the STM in October.

Very truly yours,

Patricia B. Worden, Ph.D.

Former Chair, Arlington Housing Authority, Arlington School Committee;
former Charter member, Arlington Human Rights Commission