

Creating Genuinely Affordable, Equitable, Multi-Family And Mixed-Use Housing

September 18, 2023

Dear Members of the Select Board and the Arlington Redevelopment Board;

At the risk of repeating myself, there is *more than one way* to achieve the goal of creating additional multi-family housing with mixed-use development that is inclusive, affordable, and sustainable. MBTA-C Zoning purports to be one. A revised set of Arlington Zoning Bylaws is another. One follows the State's mandated guidelines and is construction "by right" and the other is under the jurisdiction of the Town of Arlington. One relies on revised guidelines and approvals issued by the State, the other on the Town's zoning amendments created locally by the Town and passed by Arlington Town Meeting.

Over-compliance with MBTA-C will, ironically, have the unintended effect of *crowding out* our town's most desirable sites for *genuinely* "affordable" "equitable" multi-family and mixed-use housing.

MBTA-C is NOT primarily a mandate for "affordable" or "equitable" housing. When it comes to addressing housing that encourages diversity and requires inclusion, MBTA-C guidelines - at present - are weaker than Arlington's own Zoning ByLaws.

If Arlingtonians truly want to increase the supply of inclusive housing in our neighborhoods going forward, Arlington's Redevelopment Board should proceed with a *modest* MBTA-C compliance plan that adheres to the mandate as it currently stands and submit this more refined and limited proposal to Town Meeting this October.

With passage of a moderate Zoning Amendment, DPCD could then submit Arlington's MBTA-C District Compliance application to EOHLC this November 2023, allowing Arlington the ability to qualify for municipal programs and grants that are contingent on State approvals before February of 2024.

And then, without delay, **the Town should update its own Zoning ByLaws to achieve even *more sustainable, progressive inclusionary zoning* standards than those mandated by the State and craft forward-looking regulations that are right-sized for our community.**

Again, Respectfully,
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