

March 21, 2023

Good evening, I'm Anne Bodine, with Arlingtonians for Our Sustainable Future, I'm asking the Board to push back its decision until June.

Today let's remember leaders of the last century who touted the Titanic as a marvel of modernity. Theirs was a failure of imagination that something could go wrong. ASF has not lacked for imagination -- we reported our Missing Middle concerns in September 2020 -- you told us "it's only a study" and we "should read staff reports. Fast forward to today, it's not just a study, and your staff reports recommend huge change in Arlington on the bases of unproven hypothesis and exaggerations

We've **read** all the reports. And we've **done our homework**. Our data show the plan does not deliver affordability, diversity of people, ownership options, 3-bedroom homes or walkability.

- Our ASF [report of January](#) shows the EHO violates parts of the Comp Plan. As one example, staff advises you to **exceed by a factor of five** the allowed density limits for "low residential" GLUP categories.
- New housing will not "age into affordability": home prices went up at 3 times the rate of inflation over the last 30 years.
- The Staff report says the Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP) will help those "left out of" EHO. Staff leaves out the plan's revelation that we have a surplus for housing at MM price points. This is borne out by current listings of 170 properties for sale under \$1 million. But it doesn't serve the upzoning agenda to speak such truth. Advocates beat their breasts at the "housing crisis" but bury the lede that **Arlington has met all its regional [Metropolitan Washington] Council of Government goals.**

- We heard concerns from MM supporters about homeownership and wealth generation; we share them. Data shows that four to six plexes will reduce ownership options and will be 90% rentals. The plan also results in a net loss of sorely-needed 3-bedroom homes.

ASF welcomes the addition of reporting requirements. **We ask for no sunsets on annual caps on EHO permits. Or for sunsets *only* if we achieve key goals, such as 20% tree canopy or increased housing options for *current* residents of color.** We ask for reporting on demographic diversity factors -- like age, race, household income -- of those who MOVE away, and those moving into EHO units. We ask you to revive 2014 report on demographic trends in major corridors. We ask you to leave one area unchanged to serve as a control.

Our community is overwhelmed; **you are changing 40 elements of zoning and land use, filling in half our land area.** Residents are fuzzy on details, you've given no analysis of new items since April, such as lot subdivision and ADU's. Even the manager has withheld an opinion. We are left with the perception that no one cracked the nut on all the variables!

Ignoring that exclusionary zoning was outlawed in 1968, plan supporters have staked the high moral ground to claim the plan adds diversity. The staff report says the areas to be rezoned are 70% white. They omit the fact that **72% of residents who earn the \$193,000ⁱ to buy the cheapest MM unit are white.** That median African-American income was already \$40,000 too low to buy an 8-plex. That "enhanced housing" in Green Valley raised prices and helped reduce Black population by 50% [over 20 years]. This is not a plan for diversity; it's equal opportunity gentrification.

And where's the morality in promising essential workers and starter home couples something you can't deliver? Where's the morality in pushing seniors and lower income homeowners out through tax rises? Where's the morality in calling us bigots so you can carry the water for developers promising a 35% return on investment?

ASF recommends you rework the benchmarks, convene civic groups to work out impacts, and bring this back for a vote in June. Let's get this plan shipshape; don't forget those who said the Titanic was unsinkable.

ⁱ under actual market conditions and the typical down payment