

HOUSING COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING NOTES – May 5, 2022

Attendance			
	Present		Present
Berkey, Eric	Y	Rubalcava, Sara	Y
Bray, Holly	Y	Serfis, Karen	Y
Browne, Paul	Y		
Edwards, Laura Saul	Y	Staff:	
Hemminger, Michael	Y	McMillen, Alex	Y
Jackson, Angel	Y	Planning Comm. Liaison:	
Lee, Eric	-		
Macbeth, Kellen	Y		
McGilvray, Margaret	Y	Disability Advisory Comm Liason	
Montgomery, Anika	Y	Ray, Doris	Y
Norris, Haley	Y		

Held in: Virtual public meeting held through electronic communication. This meeting was recorded and is available on the Housing Commission website.

Other Staff Present: Richard Tucker of the Housing Division, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD).

Public Comment

There were no public comments for items not on the agenda.

Approval of Notes

Eric Berkey moved approval of the April 14, 2022 meeting notes, Laura Saul Edwards seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Missing Middle Housing Study

Laura Edwards stated the report did a good job showing how Missing Middle (MM) housing will fit into neighborhoods and how MM looks in other communities. She said she liked the idea of fitting multiple housing units into single family lots. She asked for more information on how increasing the amount of people on single family lots will impact things such as storm water runoff. She also asked how the County can be more creative with parking. She stated the estimated number of new units generated through MM seemed low and wondered how we can incentivize more MM housing. She concluded her thoughts by saying MM housing can work in her neighborhood and throughout the County.

Sara Rubalcava asked what other ideas are in place to increase production of MM housing. She also asked for further clarification on what zones MM housing would be permitted in. Eric Berkey answered Sara Rubalcava's question and said that this study is looking specially at single family zoned lots.

Margaret McGilvray asked whether there should be limitations on square footage for developers. She also said she was surprised at staff's assessment that MM housing may not be as attractive for developers as single-family homes.

Kellen MacBeth asked why staff believes that large single-family homes may still be developed instead of MM housing. He also asked what tools Arlington could use to disincentivize the building of mansions and encourage the building of MM housing.

Michael Hemminger asked how we can solve the housing shortage in our region, noting that staff estimates minimal development of MM housing. He also asked for clarification for lots zoned R6 through R20. He stated that a parking requirement of 0.5 per unit may not be attractive if the County doesn't have the appropriate transportation in place to meet resident's needs. He also asked if lots next to each other come available simultaneously would developers have more building options available.

Eric Berkey said he thinks the MM study was very thoughtfully done and has made many deliberate choices. However, he also stated he views the proposal as permitting MM housing instead of incentivizing MM housing.

Karen Serfis stated that parking can be an issue. She said the County may need to be more flexible with the parking requirements.

Paul Browne said the study is a good first step. He also mentioned that the parking requirement is a minimum and that developers can build more, as they know who their clients are. He said he expects much of the MM housing to be built with more parking than required. He also stated that by placing maximum unit sizes on MM housing it may disincentive the building of MM housing. Eric Berkey echoed Paul Browne's comments on the maximum unit size restrictions.

Eric Berkey posed a question to the group: by permitting these MM housing types to be built, will it drive prices up across the board? Margaret McGilvray said she noticed that the greatest increase in home prices was among single family homes between 2010-2020 and asked for more analysis from staff on that. Margaret McGilvray also asked if there are any restrictions on how many MM housing units could go in one neighborhood as to not overwhelm any one smaller area.

Eric Berkey asked for more information from staff on why the decision was made to limit accessory dwelling units from being on MM lots.

Kellen MacBeth noted that the report states MM housing could help 39% of Black and Latino households, but that there are still many that wouldn't benefit from this housing type. He is interested in learning more about the Homeownership Study and what policies and programs will be put in place to help bridge the gap even more.

Doris Ray asked where accessible housing was going to be available. She noted that there are no incentives to provide accessible MM housing.

Laura Edwards stated she thinks staff and the County Board should explore potential incentives to encourage developers to build MM housing.

Holly Bray said lenders won't be interested if the parking ratio isn't right. She also had concerns about how tree canopy and stormwater runoff may be impacted. She said she does think increasing density on these lots will raise the value of the buildings and lots.

Subcommittee Reports

Eric Berkey attended the March Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) for the Ballston Macy's/The Haven project. The project will impact both sites and the Applicant proposes utilizing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to earn the density at the Ballston Macy's site, while preserving affordability at The Haven.