

Residential Study Group (RSG)
July 26, 2018
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Arlington Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room
MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees: Andrew Bunnell, Mike Ciampa, Bill Copithorne, Wynelle Evans, Steve McKenna, Pasi Miettinen, Jonathan Nyberg, Elizabeth Pyle, Jenny Raitt, Erin Zwirko

Guests: Steve Makowka, JoAnn Robinson, Wendy Richter, Don Seltzer

Jenny opened the meeting. To ensure that everyone is properly notified of meetings, Erin will coordinate with Jenny on the correct email list.

Erin provided an overview of the data collection for the study of replacement homes that has occurred to date. Most of the information has been obtained from Inspectional Services and the online Assessor's database, but more detailed research may need to occur in person with the files. Erin did have a specific question for the group related to how to delineate neighborhoods. She noted that the Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group is working with a consultant on the historic and cultural resources survey master plan, through which "study areas" would be identified. Erin thought there may be some desire to use the same study areas as the neighborhoods for consistency across efforts, and the members in attendance generally agreed. Once that information is available, Erin would bring to the Residential Study Group for agreement.

There was some discussion on whether there is a simple way to determine whether the building permit was pulled by a developer, and ultimately flipped, or a homeowner. Steve McKenna expressed that he thought he could be helpful in regard to the data collection, especially in pulling MLS data. This information might be helpful in determining whether the property was flipped.

Erin indicated that in addition to the quantitative data, the RSG was interested in issuing a survey to the community on the topic of replacement homes. As in the scope of work on this project, it would build off the information received in the survey issued in early 2017, which led to the adoption of the good neighbor agreement and other policy changes. Erin pointed out that the previous survey was targeted to those neighbors of home construction, resulting in a very small sample size. There was some discussion on how to broaden the reach of a new survey. There was additional discussion regarding reissuing the previous survey as well as a new survey.

Members of the RSG thought it might be helpful to go back to the home construction sites that were visited in 2016 in advance of preparing the 2017 survey. There was interest in doing that again, and the RSG determined that the meeting scheduled for August 22 would be used to

complete the site visits. The details of the site visits would be discussed at the August 8 meeting, and the Planning Department staff will work with Mike Ciampa to organize.

Turning back to a new, broad survey, Liz suggested that open ended questions may not be very useful in receiving feedback on certain topics, such as housing affordability, and she would prefer a data point. Jenny suggested that surveys could be a combination of the two types of questions. Liz also noted that the questions will need to be clear enough for a layperson to understand, which might mean that graphics are included or some other explanation is provided if specific terminology were to be used in a survey. She also suggested that if we ask about residents perceptions about how to regulate new housing, we should include questions about setbacks.

Pasi suggested that it would be interesting to measure the effect of the good neighbor agreement. He also wondered if there was a measurable difference between modular construction and conventional construction. Mike Ciampa did not think there were enough modular construction examples to measure a difference. Steve McKenna thought that there might be more of a difference between a developer constructing a home and a homeowner constructing a home, since the developer is driven by profit, which in turn could suggest that the new home is completed in less time than a homeowner-driven project.

Jenny noted that the staff would bring draft survey questions to the next meeting, start to organize the site visits, and work with Steve McKenna on additional data that he might have access to.

On the minutes from the June 13, 2018 meeting, Bill made a motion to accept the summary as corrected . Wynelle seconded. All those in attendance voted in favor of approval.

Before adjourning, Jenny asked if there were any other updates from the committee. She mentioned that the newly formed Zoning Bylaw Working Group is meeting on August 1.

Liz asked about the directive from town meeting to investigate amendments to the existing demolition delay. She requested the staff bring the number of structures impacted to the next meeting. The group discussed what criteria for eligibility would be meaningful in Arlington.

Steve McKenna also mentioned that he was been considering what the Zoning Bylaw currently allows and sees some opportunity to tighten up the text in light of current development patterns. He asked if he could meet with the Planning and Inspectional Services staff to discuss his findings.

The group set upcoming meeting dates: August 8 and 22 at 9am, and September 17 at 8:30 am.

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