

Residential Study Group (RSG)
January 18, 2019
8:30 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.
Arlington Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room
MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees: Mike Ciampa, Bill Copithorne, Wynelle Evens, Pat Hanlon, Kelly Lynema, Steve McKenna, Pasi Miettinen, Liz Pyle, Jenny Raitt, Erin Zwirko

Guests: Asia Kepka, Beth Melofchik, Wendy Ritcher, JoAnn Robinson, Don Seltzer, Paul Parisi

After introductions, Erin provided an update on the additional research into the middle income households in Arlington. Erin explained that a subcommittee of herself, Kelly, Steve McKenna, Pat, and Wynelle was formed and met earlier that week although Wynelle was unable to attend. Erin explained that the trend since 1990 is that Arlington has become more affluent and more educated, although household size and median age have been relatively stable over the same number of years. Erin explained that the accepted range of middle income households is between 80% area median income (AMI) and 135% AMI, which results in a wide range of home purchasing ability. If a household were to spend 30% of its income on housing costs, the middle income households could afford between \$350,000 and \$573,000 dependent on income. If a household spent more on housing costs, up to 43% which is a typical limit for lenders, the range increases to between \$503,000 and \$832,000. Steve had provided sales data that indicated that there were homes selling in Arlington within that range. Wynelle provided some thoughts on the sales data, and noted that there were more homes selling for over a million dollars and the price per square foot is more than in the general region. Prices are trending up, similar to the increase in affluence in the community.

Pat provided some of his own thoughts on the data, specifically that single family homes should not be reported in the aggregate with condos and duplexes, which can be more affordable. He notes that there is more density in East Arlington where the middle income households are located. With the trend in East Arlington to replace single family homes with duplexes, the Study Group also has to consider that there are now two units instead of one and how that affects affordability. Jenny pointed out that condo conversions have also affected affordability in East Arlington.

Wendy asked for the sales data to be compared with data on teardowns to determine which of the sales in the range of affordable to middle income households were eventually torn down.

Moving on to the report that the Planning Department has been working on, Erin noted that at the last meeting Jenny requested that the members of the Study Group consider whether they want the report to be the Study Group's report or the Department's report. Pat suggested that the report should be from the Department, and the Study Group members in attendance agreed. Pat suggested that there is not enough time for each member to review and come to consensus, and that the Study Group has done enough talking as is possible. It is time to focus

on proposals. At this time, there are two tracks: advancing the request for an appropriation to hire a consultant to develop residential design guidelines and demolition delay should remain in the Historical Commission's hands to consider how the threshold could be improved if necessary. Pat suggested that the Study Group share a short report with Town Meeting referring to the Department's report includes facts and has recommended design guidelines at this time. The short report to Town Meeting should note that the topic at hand is complicated due to its nature and that the Study Group continues to study. But at this time, it is very important that the Study Group get back to considering proposals and moving them along to Town Meeting if appropriate.

Wynelle noted that she has reviewed the Master Plan's implementation table, and would provide suggestions to the Planning Department on what she believes the Study Group should take up. Bill suggested that at the next working meeting, the Study Group should consider taking some time to discuss what the priorities should be.

Moving on to the discussion about Town Meeting, Jenny reported that the request for a \$50,000 appropriation for residential design guidelines has been included in the Town Manager's requests. Liz had developed three proposals to move to Town Meeting: adjusting the way the slope of a driveway is measured, amending the definition of a half story, and including tree removal as a trigger for the Good Neighbor Agreement. Jenny pointed out that the Study Group cannot submit articles to the warrant and since the Redevelopment Board does not have another meeting before the warrant deadline, the three proposals would have to be citizens' petitions. The Department would provide support as necessary.

The Study Group discussed the proposals, and made some suggestions on how to fine tune the language, but felt that a meeting prior to the deadline would be necessary to finalize the article language to be submitted.

The Study Group deferred the minutes to the next meeting.

In order to finalize the three warrant articles discussed, the Study Group scheduled the next meeting for January 24 at 8:30 AM.

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