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STATEMENT ON ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD VOTE ON MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Moving Forward … Making Sense of the Missing Middle Mess
March 22, 2023

As expected, the Arlington County Board tonight voted 5-0 to move forward with the Missing Middle Housing Plan. From the beginning, the Board's goals have been unclear and shifting; the process has been lacking in transparency and common sense. Tonight the board passed a blanket upzoning, with the most benefit going to developers and high income residents. Unfortunately, this plan and this process has left our community confused, frustrated, and exhausted. Trust and transparency have suffered. And, we are no closer to a thoughtful, well-planned, and common sense housing plan.

As a candidate for the Arlington County Board, I support a different approach. The plan itself needs thorough analysis and careful monitoring. Instead of leveraging additional density to create more affordable housing, this plan gives away added density "by right" in one fell swoop. What we needed was a comprehensive approach that included long-overdue updates to lot coverage and tree ordinances; property tax relief for aging in place and pilots around home ownership and preservation–especially in our historically Black neighborhoods; and truly affordable homes for singles, couples AND families. All of this should have been completed before these sweeping changes to zoning.

We also needed a collaborative, transparent, and open planning process. We needed to work together as one Arlington and create a common sense housing plan built on what we've already done and already proven: a solid track record of successful, smart growth.

Saturday I attended an eviction prevention fair, where our faith community, nonprofit landlord, safety net, and county partnered with nearly 100 low income households to tackle financial emergencies around eviction, child care, and food security. *That* is the kind of collaboration and problem solving Arlington can do as a community. In that same spirit, we must work together across Arlington on a comprehensive housing plan - for all Arlington County residents.

Planning for expanded housing in Arlington is too important to our future to be done haphazardly. As a County Board member, I will make sure we slow down and get both the details and the process right.