Information reveals talks between Councilors, ZFH advocates

By Denise Dunbar

Residents have been sounding the alarm that members of Alexandria’s City Council have had their minds made up about the Zoning for Housing initiative prior to the public input process, and have been actively working with pro-ZFH advocates to advance the initiative.

A resident-filed Freedom of Information Act request recently shared with the Times reveals various members of City Council have met and collaborated with YIMBYs of NoVA leaders on ZFH while sharing pro-YIMBY materials. YIMBY stands for “yes in my back yard.”

The annual Holiday Tree lighting is complete, which has brightened the city center.

City ready for the holidays

Zoning for Housing, explained

What to know ahead of the November 28 vote

By Mark Eaton and Caitlyn Meisner

The city’s “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” proposal is approaching a planned vote from City Council on November 28. In light of the incoming vote, the Times has put together information from city documents and an interview with Karl Moritz, Alexandria’s current planning director, that explains the initiative with commentary from former Planning Commission Chair Eric Wagner.

Components of Zoning for Housing/Housing for All

What follows is a summary of the initiative's components from Planning & Zoning. Information from this section is quoted from alexandriava.gov/planning-and-zoning/zoning-for-housing-housing-for-all and by Planning Director Karl Moritz.

Additional quotes and commentary are from Eric Wagner, who served on the Planning Commission for 22 years, including as its chair.

Wagner, who has lived in Alexandria since 1987, was on the Commission during the 1992 vote on the master plan.

Historic development patterns: P&Z recommends a change to the current ordinance via text amendments to the zoning ordinance. The recommendations are to allow smaller lot sizes, a mix of uses, a mix of residential types in all zones and to simplify the number of zones. The text amendments would allow the removal of “dwelling-units-per-acre limitations in

Pulling back the curtain

Information reveals talks between Councilors, ZFH advocates

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Councilor Kirk McPike in particular had frequent communications with YIMBYs of NoVA Chief Executive and

Alexandria’s Golden Girl

Nancy Hulkower’s journey on “The Golden Bachelor.”

Page 10

Remember Your Favorite Alexandria Non-Profit Organizations this holiday season! Giving Tuesday on 11/28 & End of Year Giving by 12/31
Please Join Us In Bringing Holiday Cheer!

We are thrilled to announce our 4th annual holiday toy drive! We absolutely love this time of year and are grateful for the opportunity to spread holiday cheer to local families in need, with the help of our generous community. Thank you in advance for helping to make this year’s drive our biggest yet!

WHAT: Toy drive benefitting A Wider Circle.
We are accepting new, unwrapped gifts appropriate for children ages 0-17.

DROP-OFF LOCATIONS (drop-offs are being received during open business hours 11/29-12/13):
Rubia’s
2309 Mount Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301

Mae’s Market & Café
277 S. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

THANK YOU!
Bring a gift to Rubia’s and get a hot chocolate or margarita, or drop off at Mae’s and enjoy a hot chocolate or glass of wine, courtesy of Rubia’s, Mae’s & The Rivkin Group!

Bonnie & Courtney Rivkin
therivkingroup@compass.com
b: 703.598.7788 | c: 703.869.7788
rivkinresidential.com
Week of November 23 crime roundup

A person was robbed at the 5700 block of Mer- ton Court around 2:30 a.m. Tuesday according to an Alexandria Police Department notification. An adult male has minor injuries and money was taken. APD is currently investigating, and those with information can call 703-746-4444.

There was a commercial robbery of a convenience store at the 800 block of Franklin Street around midnight Tuesday according to an APD notification. A minor injury was reported and suspects fled the scene. Those with information can call 703-746-4444 to assist in the active investigation.

On November 17, APD apprehended an adult male suspected of driving a stolen vehicle outside of William Ramsay Elementary School around 1 p.m., according to a news release from the department. APD was alerted by Fairfax County Police of the suspect as he entered the city. The school was placed on a temporary “secure the building” status while the investigation concluded. There was no threat to students nor faculty. Fairfax County Police are leading the investigation into the incident. Those with information should call APD’s non-emergency line at 703-746-4444. Tips and information can be anonymous.

-WEEKLY BRIEFING-

Remembrance Project offers scholarships

The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project has launched two new student scholarships in remembrance of Alexandria’s known lynching victims, Joseph McCoy and Benjamin Thomas, according to a press release from Alexandria City Public Schools. The $3,000 scholarships will be awarded to two ACHS African American students in the class of 2024 toward educational goals. ACRP hopes to make this scholarship a yearly endowment to ACHS students.

The Joseph McCoy Memorial scholarship is to be awarded to a student planning on pursuing a trade and can be applied to a community college or programs. The Benjamin Thomas Memorial scholarship is to be awarded to a student planning on going to a four-year college or university, with a preference for an intent to study in a social justice or “truth-telling” field.

-joyful gratitude-

So happy to be safe and cared for, little Elsa entered the Shelter as a foundling. Now, about a year old, Elsa has grown to nearly 60 pounds and is 100% marshmallow-sweet. Her unique look suits her super-gentle personality. Still lots of puppy energy; Elsa enjoys a long walk, a game of Fetch and lots of pets and attention from humans. You will love her.

Meet Elsa!
AlexandriaAnimals.org/Adopt-By-Appointment
703-746-4774

City boards seek applicants

City Council is accepting applications for multiple boards, commissions and committees due to vacancies. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on December 1 and will be discussed at the December 12 Council legislative meeting.

Entities seeking applications include: Emergency Medical Services Council, Commission on Employment, Building Code Board of Appeals, Transportation Commission, Housing Affordability Advisory Committee and Gang Prevention Community Task Force. More information on applications and details of each entity can be found at alexandriava.gov/boards-and-commissions/vacancies.

-WEEKLY BRIEFING-

Thanksgiving office closures

All city government offices will be closed on Thanksgiving day and many will be closed Friday as well. DASH will operate on a Sunday schedule Thursday and will resume regular service Friday. All emergency hotlines will remain open 24/7 throughout the holiday. The Alexandria Health Department, Flora K. Casey Pharmacy and Teen Wellness Center at ACHS close at noon Wednesday and will reopen Monday.

Libraries will be closed Thursday and Friday. The Torpedo Factory is closed Thursday, but will conduct normal operations Friday. Residential refuse, recycling and yard waste will be collected regularly. Curbside food waste will be delayed by one day.

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multifamily zones to allow smaller unit sizes within the same development envelope which could increase unit production by an estimated 1.5 to 2.5 units in some projects.”

A text amendment would also “remove zone transition setback requirements, which require additional setbacks when adjacent to residential zones regardless of the actual use of the properties and the proposed new construction” and implement townhouse zoning recommendations in ZFH.

There is a phase two recommendation, but further study is needed. Council will not be voting on the second phase of the ZFH plan on November 28.

Residential multi-family zones: The recommendation is to amend the Housing Master Plan to allow RMF zones in areas already planned for medium to high-density development and locations consistent with city policies. The text amendments include to amend the RMF zone in the zoning ordinance to allow for expansion of the “number of uses allowed on the ground floor of RMF buildings and establish general intent for RMF rezonings.”

Wagner said he does not have a particular issue with this change, but there are many areas already zoned for this purpose. He said during the master plan discussions in 1992 – when he was on the commission – there were important facets that need not be changed now.

“Areas in Alexandria that are zoned for residential should be preserved as residential and at the same densities that are permitted today,” Wagner said. “It was something the community pushed very strongly to be included because Alexandria … has a somewhat unique look and feel.”

Industrial zones: P&Z recommends providing criteria for new non-residential construction in the industrial zone to promote compatibility with future redevelopment. This is because the majority of industrial-zoned land is already planned for mixed-use redevelopment. Adding residential uses or other potential changes for industrially-zoned land south of Duke Street will be considered at a later date.

The text amendment changes would include adding site and “building criteria to the industrial zone to require new buildings to be compatible with any potential future residential/pedestrian-scale development.”

In short, zoning codes for industrial zones and buildings will be updated to reflect the modernity of Alexandria and make these zones more compatible with future zoning changes to accommodate a growing city.

Wagner added he did not necessarily oppose this change, but he found it an ironic shift from his time on the Commission.

“Back in 1992, the city wanted to make sure it preserved some industrially zoned parts of the city,” Wagner said. “I get that we’ve moved beyond that – and maybe that’s OK....

Multiple places in the city are zoned specifically for single-family homes, but that may change if the initiative passes.
Just imagine....

You could be in a more spacious and comfortable home for the holiday season!

Scan to schedule a call with us today and let’s explore your options.

110 N Royal Street, Ste 300 | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.868.5676
www.lizluke.com
Eventually I think we’re going to get to a place where it all becomes residential, and in a way that’s a shame.”

**Coordinated development districts:** The recommendation from P&Z would be to affirm the city shall continue to “require one-third of bonus density to be committed affordable” – or income-restricted – units. These unit types are typically restricted for a period of time and available for households earning at or below 60% of the area median income, according to the Alliance for Housing Solutions, an Arlington-based nonprofit working to provide more affordable housing.

There are no text amendment changes proposed. The equity impact published by the city states this would improve housing inequality and locate more affordable units in these CDDs close to transit and jobs.

**Expansion of transit-oriented development:** P&Z believes “the planned priority transit corridors in Alexandria West and the Duke Street corridor present an opportunity to add more market rate and affordable housing.”

Recommendations for this aspect of the ZFH initiative go hand-in-hand with other plans, including the Duke Street corridor plan, the Braddock Metro Neighborhood plan and the Alexandria West Small Area Plan: evaluate current un- or under-developed land to make way for transit-oriented development. Staff also recommends conducting a future study on removing parking requirements for affordable housing within a half mile of a Metro station.

“Text amendments are not applicable in this case.

Wagner believes this aspect of ZFH needs more clarification from city staff. He said staff has “muddled the waters” and essentially declared large swaths of the city as priority transit corridors.

“If things are close to the Metro stations that should support higher density of development, that’s what we’d like to see,” Wagner said. “What [city staff] has done in the process is basically included almost all of the city [within enhanced transit areas]. The bus runs maybe every 30 minutes. People don’t think of that as, ‘OK, I can just give up the car.’”

**Office-to-residential conversions:** P&Z recommends office-to-residential conversions for class B or C – mainly older – buildings that are deemed non-competitive or obsolete for new commercial tenants. Staff also recommends establishing a Council policy that conversions should use Section 7-700 – which allows for increases in floor area ratio, density and height with reductions in required off-street parking – to “increase residential density in exchange for affordable housing.”

Wagner believes this is a “smart way to go” in utilizing space that exists in the city.

“Given that there’s office vacancies and office rents

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**ERIC WAGNER**

What [city staff has] done in the process is basically included almost all of the city [within enhanced transit areas]. The bus runs maybe every 30 minutes. People don’t think of that as, ‘OK, I can just give up the car.’”

– Eric Wagner, former Planning Commission chair
Staff believes that our housing and planning policies have evolved since 1992 ... and protecting residential neighborhoods is no longer dependent on strict adherence to one dwelling unit per lot.”

— Staff recommendation

have come down, the priority ought to be, as businesses come back, as office space gets leased, it ought to be leased in the best commercial buildings first,” Wagner said. “We shouldn’t let those convert to residential because if and when the office market comes back, that’s going to be where the demand is.”

Townhouse zoning: Increased townhouse development would not be a significant change, but wants to ensure that densities in single-family zones is framed in this P&Z decision for the single-family zoning ordinance.

The guiding principles for these recommendations is to “establish lot requirements based on location and similarity of lot size/pattern/configuration instead of housing type, eliminate bulk and open space inconsistencies across townhouse zones and revise requirements to more closely align with existing lot size/pattern/configuration.”

Wagner said this amendment would not be a significant change, but wants to ensure open space is not sacrificed for more units.

“Anything that we’re doing that takes away open space, I think, is problematic,” he said. “It’s probably not unreasonable that if you have a lot that is only 25 feet wide – that’s not atypical in a townhouse zone – and if you have to give up seven or eight feet of it for a side yard, then you’ve really got an impractical lot to build on.”

Single-family zones: Housing options would be increased in single-family zones by permitting multi-unit dwellings and revising parking requirements. Staff has recommended a number of changes to the current zoning ordinance.

The essential policy decision for the single-family zones is framed in this P&Z recommendation:

“Staff recommends an amendment to a policy statement contained in some 1992 chapters of the Master Plan. That policy statement states that densities in single-family residential neighborhoods should not be increased. Staff believes that our housing and planning policies have evolved since 1992 such that the overall goal of supporting and protecting residential neighborhoods is no longer dependent on strict adherence to one dwelling unit per lot.”

In terms of increasing the number of dwelling units, staff recommends Council adopt one of two options. Option one is to construct two-unit dwellings in the R20, R12, R8 and R5 zones and three to four multi-unit dwellings in the R2-5 zone. 66 estimated buildings are to be constructed over a 10-year period with 150 units.

Option two is to construct two, three and four-unit dwellings in all zones mentioned above. This would create an estimated 66 new buildings over 10 years with an estimated 178 units.

Taking the word “family” out of the zoning ordinance and replacing it with “dwellings” in order to recognize the changing definition of family is another recommendation.

Staff has also recommended to Council to revise parking requirements for residential dwellings throughout the city based on location within or outside the enhanced transit areas. Option three of four is preferred by staff, which is to allow for no minimum parking requirement for dwellings up to four units within an enhanced transit area and a minimum of a half a parking space per unit for dwellings up to four units outside the enhanced transit area. Another recommendation is to allow for a minimum of half a space inside enhanced transit areas and a minimum of one space per dwelling outside these areas.
YIMBYs

Founder Luca Gattoni-Celli in advance of key dates during the unveiling of the city’s ZFH initiative. In one text McPike disparaged the Coalition for a Livable Alexandria, an anti-ZFH group in the city. Councilor Alyia Gaskins also met with YIMBY leaders the day of a key ZFH event.

McPike had a lengthy, collaborative text exchange with Gattoni-Celli about ZFH that began back in July. On July 25 at 6:20 p.m., Gattoni-Celli texted McPike asking, “How do you think staff work is going behind the scenes? On Zoning for Housing”

There is no texted response from McPike on that date in the FOIA documents; however, Gattoni-Celli texted McPike again at 10:24 a.m. on August 29, the morning of a ZFH launch event, stating, “The morning has as its subject “Re: Connecting: Alyia Gaskins, Alex Goyette & Luca Gattoni-Celli – Zoning for Housing.”

For Housing”

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In the email, Goyette said: “Hi Councilmember Gaskins, just writing to confirm our call this afternoon at 1 p.m. Looking forward to chatting and hope to see you at the Zoning for Housing launch event this evening!”

To which Gaskins replied, “Hi Alex. Yes on both fronts. Talk to you at 1. Alyia”

Another email chain existed in which McPike on August 9 forwarded Mayor Justin Wilson a detailed article by Matthew Yglesias entitled “YIMBYs keep winning: Other movements should pay attention and learn lessons.” McPike commented “This is pretty on point.”

On August 16, Wilson then forwarded the article to Amy Friedlander, the director of acquisitions for the development company EYA – which has built numerous multi-family housing complexes in Alexandria – with the comment “FYI.”

Kirk McPike

“’No matter what speed you move at, if someone opposes a proposal they will say it’s all moving too quickly.’”

– Kirk McPike, city councilor

There were about a dozen YIMBYs and a dozen different people affiliated with VOICE. VOICE stands for Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement.

Gattoni-Celli then said of Councilor Canek Aguirre, “Canek kind of sat with us,” and Gattoni-Celli added that he didn’t see ZFH opponent Bill Rossello at the event.

On September 5 – the date the city released the specific language of the ZFH initiative – at 6:42 p.m. Gattoni-Celli texted McPike saying Planning Commissioner, “Melissa McMahon is right” without elaborating. McPike did not text a reply but had apparently called McPike at 8:47 p.m. saying, “Was wrapping up bedtime, but I’m ready for you to call again.”

In the same group of texts Gattoni-Celli gives McPike the contact information for YIMBYs of NOVA Vice President for Alexandria Alex Goyette, “in case I do not pick up.”

To which McPike responded, “I’m available for a while if you want to call. Just wanted to check in because you message[d].”

Gattoni-Celli responded a bit later that night: “We’ll catch up with you soon once we process all of this, we should do a video call.”

On September 7, Gattoni-Celli texted McPike a screenshot of talking points from the CLA, followed by the text: “I’ll try not to say this too often but concessions don’t work.”

McPike responded in a text, saying, “I don’t think staff made any concessions to appease this group that was literally formed to say ‘no’ to whatever was produced.”

Additionally, on the day of the August 29 launch event, email exchanges reveal Councilor Alyia Gaskins held an hour-long video meeting with 1 p.m. with Gattoni-Celli and Goyette. A reminder email that morning has as its subject “Re: Connecting: Alyia Gaskins, Alex Goyette & Luca Gattoni-Celli – Zoning for Housing.”

McPike wanted to know the ratio of supporters to opponents, asking, “What do you think the breakdown of the crowd was?”

Gattoni-Celli said, “Pretty even, not as many opponents as I was expecting. There were also hardly any disruptions.

There were about a dozen YIMBYs and a dozen different people affiliated with VOICE.”

McPike wanted to know the ratio of supporters to opponents, asking, “What do you think the breakdown of the crowd was?”

Gattoni-Celli responded, “Karl [Moritz, Alexandria’s director of Planning and Zoning] did a particularly good job. Staff ably answered leading questions.”

To which Gattoni-Celli responded, “Canek kind of sat with us,” and Gattoni-Celli added that he didn’t see ZFH opponent Bill Rossello at the event.

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You’re changing a neighborhood that people bought into in good faith based on what the zoning was and what was permitted to be built next to them.”

– Eric Wagner, former Planning Commission chair

ZFH FROM | 7

Wagner takes issue with these single-family zoning changes, for several reasons.

“I think it changes the fundamental character of the single-family neighborhoods, and it’s just not necessary,” Wagner said. “You’re changing a neighborhood that people bought into in good faith based on what the zoning was and what was permitted to be built next to them.”

Wagner said elimination of single family neighborhoods would be a significant erosion in the compact between the city and residents.

“This is the kind of thing that creates mistrust,” Wagner said. “This is my third house [in the city] and every time I understood what the neighborhood looked like and I think that’s what most people who buy a single-family home ... do. To now just turn around and fundamentally change that? It violates that bond between myself and the government.”

Wagner also said building more units on a single lot – or more units in general – will not allow for more affordable housing to be available.

“If you take a piece of property today that only allows a single-family house, and let’s say that house would sell for $1.2 million – which, OK, that’s not affordable to somebody with median family income,” Wagner said. “But if you then put up three units on [that lot] and each of those units is going to sell for $900,000 to $1 million, you’ve created more units, but none of them are affordable to somebody who earns median income.”

All for one, one for all?

A major criticism of ZFH is it’s all encompassing, which is overwhelming for the city and its residents. Many residents also said the initiative was just introduced, leaving them no time to properly review the documents and proposed changes.

At the September 5 joint meeting, Mayor Justin Wilson said making changes to the zoning ordinance in full was in response to what the community wanted when the reform process began. Moritz and others believe that a one-proposal-at-a-time approach would require an inordinate expenditure of time by the public and city staff and policy makers.

Staff says the initiative began in 2019 with the Regional Housing Initiative and continued through 2021 and 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Moritz said the initiatives left over from RHI were delayed.

The city has held a total of 20 meetings and events – in hybrid formats with translation available – since the spring, in addition to the community questionnaire, comment board and summer community cook-outs.

Wagner agrees with critics, believing the initiative is moving too fast. He recommended removing the single-family issue out of the November 28 vote and dealing with those in 2024. Wagner said this will not just impact those in single-family neighborhoods, but the entire community.

City Council is scheduled to vote on Zoning for Housing/Housing for All at the November 28 legislative meeting.

– cmisner@alextimes.com

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td
Alexandria’s Nancy Hulkower shares her experience on ‘Golden Bachelor’

BY WAFIR SALIH

Nancy Hulkower, a 61-year-old retired interior designer from Alexandria, recently captured the hearts of viewers nationwide on ABC’s inaugural season of “The Golden Bachelor.” Describing the experience as “serendipitous,” Hulkower spent her time on the show continuing her ongoing search for new love, while also forging friendships with other contestants and stepping out of her comfort zone.

What makes this spin-off of “The Bachelor” different from other iterations of the franchise – which debuted back in March of 2002 – is that the prospective bachelor, Gerry Turner, is 71 years old, while all of the female contestants are aged 60 and above.

Unlike the younger contestants in previous years of “The Bachelor,” many of whom were searching for their first or “true” love, Hulkower and this group of mature, beautiful women have experienced much more of life, including love and loss.

“I met these 21 other women, and we all, you know, had had loss,” Hulkower said. “We’d all lived life.”

Journey to the show

Hulkower’s path to ‘The Golden Bachelor’ began unexpectedly. The idea came from her niece who suggested the idea last year during Thanksgiving.

“My 28-year-old niece told me last Thanksgiving that, ‘Aunt Nancy, they have a new show for older people who want to date!’ And I was like, ‘what?”’ Hulkower said. “She said, ‘You need to apply,’ And I said, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m not doing that!’ And she said, ‘No, no, no, I’m serious. It’s the Golden Bachelor!’”

Despite initial hesitation, Hulkower embraced the idea and began the extensive application process.

Contestants are required to fill out a detailed questionnaire covering personal background, family history and education. The more critical part of the application delves into questions about love, relationship preferences and how important religion, race and politics are when dating someone. Applicants are also asked to submit six photos of themselves to showcase different aspects of their personality.

A quest for love

PHOTO/ABC/CRAIG SJODIN

Nancy Hulkower shares a heartfelt moment with Gerry Turner on ‘The Golden Bachelor.’

Help us cross the finish line on Giving Tuesday!

The Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation – your connection to nature, culture, and community in Alexandria – is building the first fully-accessible kayak launch in the region, and we have nearly reached our funding goal.

On or before Nov. 28, support all-ability access to Alexandria’s home waters! Donate today at www.fourmilerun.org
“We sent [the application] in and it was kind of like, when you buy lottery tickets, you think it’ll never happen. Well, literally three months later, I get an email and I was like, ‘What?’ And then that’s sort of what led me to where I am now. I was so excited,” Hulkower said.

How the show works

“The Bachelor” is a reality television dating show where one man dates a group of 20 or so women during the course of several weeks. Through a series of rose ceremonies, the man or woman narrows down their choices until they find their potential future partner. The main cast member, the bachelor or bachelorette, takes contestants on group or solo dates to gain a better understanding of their personality and dynamic. Contestants of the original show typically range from their early 20s to mid 30s.

The show has turned into a franchise, now regularly running “The Bachelorette,” which is the same premise, but men vie for the single bachelorette. There is also “Bachelor in Paradise,” which has dozens of previous cast members on either “The Bachelor” or “The Bachelorette” – most often the fan favorites and controversial characters.

“The Golden Bachelor” follows the same formula, but with a mature cast, which has led to interesting storylines and twists not previously seen. Spanning nine episodes, the show is primarily filmed in Los Angeles, California, where Hulkower spent the majority of her time. The later episodes bring a more personal touch – the bachelor and a finalist visiting her hometown – and the season finale takes place in the scenic landscape of Costa Rica. Oftentimes, the finale is filmed in a tropical location.

Turner, a retired restaurant owner and an Indiana native, is the “golden” bachelor for this season. He was married to his high school sweetheart, Toni, for more than 43 years until she passed away from kidney failure in 2017. Six years following Toni’s passing, Turner is starring in “The Golden Bachelor” in an effort to find new love.

On the set

Entering the world of reality television for the first time, Hulkower said she was hesitant at first.

“Of course I was scared. It was unknown. I’d never done anything like that before,” Hulkower said. “We all really came together, even on the first day. As the days went on we all bonded and it wasn’t scary. Although we did do some things that were out of all of our comfort zones.”

As Hulkower’s time on the show progressed, she found high school sweetheart, Toni, for more than 43 years until she passed away from kidney failure in 2017. Six years following Toni’s passing, Turner is starring in “The Golden Bachelor” in an effort to find new love.

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Hulkower’s journey on the show spanned four episodes. During a group pickleball date, she sustained a stress fracture in her foot. After visiting urgent care and being told she’d have to wear a boot for the rest of her time on the show, Hulkower initially did not think much of it.

But, the physical toll started to build. Ultimately, upon further reflection, she made the difficult decision to leave the show early. “We’re going up and down stairs every day and changing clothes several times and just a lot, and my leg hurt, bottom line,” Hulkower said.

Her initial concern about the inconvenience shifted to a realization that she was not falling in love with Turner. “I thought: ‘I would wear a boot across the desert if it was the right person,’” Hulkower said. “But I already could tell at that point – and that was maybe three weeks in – that [Turner] really did have, I think, true connections with a few other women other than myself.”

During episode four, Hulkower expressed to Turner this sentiment, to which he said he wouldn’t dispute, resulting in a tearful moment among the cast when she exited.

Hulkower said she wished things had played out differently. “I wish I could have had a one-on-one date with Gary, but that didn’t happen,” Hulkower said. “You’re competing with several other women for a few minutes at a time with him. So it was competitive, but not in a catty way. We were all also rooting for each other.”

**Love, loss and healing**

One recurring theme in “The Golden Bachelor” is the profound experience of loss shared by the contestants. Many, like Hulkower, joined the show after having lost their partners.

Hulkower was married to Mark, a prominent Washington, D.C. lawyer for 22 years prior to his passing in 2011. Hulkower recalls fondly their first time meeting each other. “We met on a blind date in Florida. He was an attorney in D.C. and I was working in Florida and he was down there on business. One thing led to another on [and] a friend that I worked with said, ‘I want you to meet this guy,’” Hulkower said. The connection between them was immediate and mutual.

“We went out on our first date and then the next morning he had to fly back here to D.C.,” Hulkower said. “I got a dozen roses and he said, ‘That was the most wonderful night and I’ll miss you, and I can’t wait to see you again.’ And I was like, ‘OK, I’m in.’”

Together they raised three children, navigating the ups and downs of life together until Mark’s death from colon cancer. Hulkower described how challenging that time was.

“My husband was sick for three and a half years [prior to his passing] and so I felt like I’d been alone, even though I wasn’t, while he was sick. But that whole process was very long,” Hulkower said.

In her grief, Hulkower, along with two close friends of her husband, established a foundation to raise awareness and funds for colon cancer research.

“We started a foundation, we had it [for] seven years and then we joined with [Colorectal] Cancer Alliance to raise money for colon cancer awareness and also to spread the word about getting your colonoscopy when you should,” Hulkower explained. “That I think was the most cathartic thing, and I told my kids: ‘We have to do something to give back.’”

In Mark’s memory, the three of them donated the money raised to Georgetown University Hospital, where Mark had received treatment.

**Continuing the search for love**

Hulkower emerged from “The Golden Bachelor” with a new perspective on her own loneliness, as well as her desire for companionship. She said widows should embrace the discomfort and seize the opportunity to find love again, whether it be in-person or through dating apps.

“Do it, do it, do it!” Hulkower said. “The only person who’s coming to my house on a regular basis is the mailman and the UPS man. I’m not going to meet anybody other than those two to date. I think dating apps, especially for people my age and older, you know, it’s a newer area that we haven’t been familiar with growing up – but that’s the way people are meeting.”

Hulkower said she’s single at the moment, but remains hopeful of finding love soon.

“I still have a lot of life to live and I have a lot of love to give,” Hulkower said. “I’m going to push myself to make it more of an effort to meet more people and just get out there.”

-wsa@alextimes.com
Making the Marsh beautiful

**Friends of Dyke Marsh aim to clean up natural wetlands**

**BY LAURA VAN PATE**

Friends of Dyke Marsh is a nonprofit organization that has spent more than four decades with one mission in mind: to make the Dyke Marsh as beautiful as it can be.

Dyke Marsh is a freshwater wetland consisting of 485 acres of tidal marsh, floodplain and swamp forest in Alexandria. It’s one of the largest wetlands remaining in the DMV area. Officially maintained by the National Park Service, the Friends collaborate with NPS to keep the area clean.

Formed by Ed Risley and Jed Byrne in 1976, Friends of Dyke Marsh has long done work on the historic Alexandria wetland, such as hosting trash cleanups and advocating for the conservation and restoration of the marsh.

“Friends of Dyke Marsh started because Risley and Byrne realized that there were a lot of problems with the marsh, such as commercial fishing, and that the marsh was eroding away,” Glenda Booth, the current president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, said. “The organization has done many great things to preserve the marsh and that’s a reason I joined.”

One of the reasons why Friends of Dyke Marsh wants to preserve the area is because of its environmental significance.

“We believe it’s important to preserve Dyke Marsh because of its predominance of not only being a national park but also because it’s one of the largest remaining freshwater tidal wetlands in the Washington, D.C. area,” Booth said.

Removal of invasive plant species is a key component of Friends of Dyke Marsh’s efforts. The organization sends out a group of volunteers twice a month to remove invasive vegetation which harms Dyke Marsh’s flora and fauna.

Friends of Dyke Marsh also shares the beauty of the marsh by hosting bird walks every Sunday, where those interested can find and identify birds that live in the area while guided by an expert bird watcher.

“I definitely feel like our efforts to preserve Dyke Marsh have been useful to the Alexandria community, and we’re doing everything we can to keep Dyke Marsh beautiful,” Booth said.

The organization has remained active for almost half a century because of its nearly 400 volunteer members of all ages.

“We have great diversity in terms of the ages of volunteers who work with us,” Jim Gearing, a seven-year volunteer of the organization, said. “People that are older work with high school volunteers, and even kids as young as six years old come to help out with their parents. Overall, it’s just a great time, and it’s for a great cause.”

Gearing said he felt called to volunteer with the Friends because of his upbringing.

“When I moved to Virginia, I ended up living near Dyke Marsh and I wanted to help preserve it because of my love for swamp areas.”

As is often the case with volunteering, those who sign up to help out often find themselves receiving as much as they give.

“I’ve met some of my best friends through Friends of Dyke Marsh,” Gearing said. “It’s really amazing to think that I wouldn’t have met these people if it wasn’t for our organization and the environment.”

Friends of Dyke Marsh is one of the many environmental groups in Alexandria that works to preserve natural areas in the DMV. There are several other groups in Alexandria cut from the same cloth, including Friends of the Mount Vernon Trail – which focuses on preserving the Mount Vernon Trail – and the Four Mile Run Conservatory Foundation, which promotes nature, culture and community at Four Mile Run Park.

Friends of Dyke Marsh has volunteer opportunities beyond their twice-a-month removing invasive plant species project. Those interested in volunteering or learning more about Friends of Dyke Marsh can email info@fodm.org.

- lvampate@alextimes.com
To understand the mood of a room, look no further than its walls. Wallpaper can add instant texture and flair, and today’s DIY-friendly options make it easy to create inspired spaces with little fuss.

The key to successful wallpapering is in the preparation. Clean, dry walls are a must, and any holes or cracks should be filled and sanded. To avoid paste that absorbs into porous surfaces, take time to apply a light, even coat of primer before beginning.

Choose a corner or space behind a door as your starting point. Mark your starting point using a level to draw a vertical line from floor to ceiling. Next, cut a length of wallpaper several inches longer than the height of your wall from the baseboard to ceiling.

Apply paste or activate the adhesive according to the manufacturer’s directions. Be sure to fully cover or dampen the paper surface; dry spots may result in unsightly bubbles.

Begin smoothing the paper onto the wall using the vertical line as a guide. Begin at the ceiling and smooth using a brush or plastic smoothing tool. If you encounter wrinkles or bubbles, gently lift the paper and smooth, relaying the paper as you go.

With each strip, you should end with several inches above the ceiling joint and below the baseboard line. Ensure the paper has firmly adhered top to bottom then trim using a sharp blade. Smooth each seam as you go.

Continue this process around the room, aligning your paper pattern as needed. If it isn’t possible to completely match the pattern, focus on the middle third of the wall, which is most likely to be at eye level.

To maneuver corners, cut a slit in the paper overhanging the ceiling and floor. This allows the paper to lay flat for a smoother finish.

When you round back to your starting point, overlap your original strip of paper with the final strip. Make a single cut for a clean, crisp seam. Gently wipe away excess adhesive from the trim and seams.

To prevent rips and ripples, allow paper to dry completely – at least overnight – before replacing furniture and hanging artwork to complete your space.
NOVEMBER 24

HOLIDAY ORNAMENT WORKSHOP
Create a collection of holiday wood ornaments or a Hanukkah village set at this family-friendly workshop. Each participant must be registered. Each guest can make their own set of six ornaments or three village houses. Register for tickets. 
Time: 9:30 to 11 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. 
Location: 1212 King St. 
Information: alexandria@ arworkshop.com or 703-566-0177

TRASH TREKKERS
Join the Barrett Branch Library Trash Trekkers to clean up the area around the library. Clean up supplies will be provided and dress for the weather. Registration required. 
Time: 10 to 11 a.m. 
Location: Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. 
Information: Email Megan at mzimmerman@ alexlibraryva.org

HOMES ADVERTORIAL

Custom-built expansive home

Neighboring Old Town is this two-year-old, custom build carefully curated with detailed high-end finishes throughout. The high ceilings, large rooms, millwork and design details are incomparable, and the sweeping staircase sublime. One primary suite is on the main level with a roll-in shower. The great room is the heart of the home, and the kitchen features a Lacanche seven-burner stove and custom solid white oak cabinetry. Behind pocket doors are quiet work and homework spaces with smart internet and fluid entertaining flow. There are four levels with six ensuite bedrooms. The Diamond Glass lacquered wet bar, pantry and 1,000-bottle wine cellar are unparalleled. The three-season living room features a wood-burning fireplace and television connector – for some major football viewing and there is a grilling porch with hood. Formal spaces and quiet nooks for the most discerning.

HOME OF THE WEEK

Left: Two-year-old stone house on East Boulevard Drive. Middle: Stunning kitchen with six-seat marble island. Right: Three-season living room with fireplace adjacent to grilling porch.
Letters

I strongly support ZFH

To the editor:

In the most recent “City Hall Watch” column, the author takes a divisive and off-the-mark approach of characterizing the Zoning for Housing debate as one between “long-term residents” and of “special interests” and “activists.” It appears that any residents in support of zoning changes to improve housing availability and affordability must belong to some outside activist group or be “young adult newcomers.” This is obviously not the case.

The author would be surprised to meet me – and thousands of other long-time residents and homeowners well above age 40 – who want more affordable housing in our neighborhoods, right where we live, and who reject the status quo of city-wide divisions along income and racial lines.

I wholeheartedly support Zoning for Housing/Housing for All because doing away with single family-only zoning will help ensure that the pernicious legacy of redlining, here and in countless other zip codes across the country, no longer needs to be a barrier for achieving socioeconomic diversity. Less expensive housing in our wonderful city will enhance life for our residents, not cause harm.

I’ve been a resident here for more than 13 years and a homeowner for more than half that. My one school-age child is in public school. I’m also on the steering committee of Grassroots Alexandria, a homegrown group of long-time city residents. I’d like to note that we have an annual budget of zero and receive zero outside funding. We drive the agenda ourselves. We are not a “special interest.” Voices of all residents matter, not just those of “long-term residents.”

If, like me, you support expanding housing opportunities, please make your voice heard before the November 28 Council vote. If you reject the proposed changes, but support improving housing availability and affordability in Alexandria, then I ask – what are your solutions?

-Kevin Brady, committee member, Grassroots Alexandria

Opinion

Up-zoning won’t make Alexandria more livable

To the editor:

Mayor Justin Wilson clearly thinks that Zoning for Housing, as the sweeping changes to the city’s zoning rules are known, will make Alexandria more affordable to those who currently find it too expensive to rent or purchase a house here.

Supporters of the plan have called opponents out of touch with the future, while the plan’s opponents claim that the city’s planning department has not studied the impacts of their proposal on single family neighborhoods and the town generally.

I can find little evidence to substantiate the conclusion that increasing the amount of housing automatically lowers the cost of housing. In fact, it does the opposite in some cases. What is clear is that local governments must subsidize the housing in some significant way if it is to result in more units of some type of affordable housing.

What’s missing in the debate too is the importance of wages, which we have only so much control over locally.

The other missing piece of the up-zoning story involves taking a look at past high-density development to see how it has impacted the city’s livability. Livability can be defined in different ways, but here are a few things I think are important to the quality of life in Alexandria.

The city’s tree canopy has declined significantly despite the civic efforts of tree stewards and groups like the Northridge Citizen’s Association, which has tried to protect the neighborhoods’ shade trees and plant even more. More of the city’s native biodiversity has been lost, as the clearcutting of the Karig forest sadly showed. And, despite the growth in our tax base, we have not set aside an adequate amount of recreational space to meet the demand of Alexandria’s growing population.

There has also been a precipitous decline in the number of affordable housing units despite all the new construction.

The city claims that in tearing down public housing, for example, it has not lost any affordable housing in the process of building million-dollar, single-family homes. But the fact is, if we had used the land to build only affordable housing units, we could have significantly increased the number of low- and middle-income housing units in places like Old Town.

While efforts to make Alexandria more affordable to low- and middle-income wage earners is a laudable goal, I’m skeptical that more up-zoning will prevent the city from becoming less affordable, more crowded, more congested, less historic and more devoid of nature.

The city has failed to examine the potential adverse impacts of up-zoning on its residential neighborhoods, just as it failed to anticipate and prevent some of the environmental and quality of life impacts associated with smart growth. All the while saying that it was planning for the future.

-Andrew Macdonald, former vice mayor; chair, Environmental Council of Alexandria

In order to fit in every letter we received on the Zoning for Housing initiative, we are not running an editorial this week.

Letters

ZFH evokes Soviet era

To the editor:

The November 14 City Council meeting to consider changes to the city’s zoning laws was eerily reminiscent of a scene in the Oscar winning movie “Dr. Zhivago.” In the scene, after serving in the Army during the time of the 1917 Russian revolution, Zhivago returns to Moscow, now under Soviet rule.

Arriving at his house, he is confronted by comrade Kapru-gina, the humorless chairman of the local residence commit-

tee, who informs Zhivago that the house has been confiscated by the government and, while it previously was a single-fam-
ily home, according to Kapru-gina, “it has living space for 13 families.”

While the times and circumstances may have changed, the idea is the same: The government’s wishes always take precedent over property rights and the desires of private citizens.

-Thomas Spoehr, Alexandria

“Where the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe.”
-Thomas Jefferson
Letters

ZFH isn’t well thought out

To the editor:

Regarding the recent “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” the Alexandria Times has been reporting on, we find this city initiative quite confusing. The staff report available online to be discussed at the November 1 meeting was 142 pages. The proposal is difficult to assess and understand either the proposed changes or the impact they will have on the citizens of Alexandria.

If understood correctly, the concept is to enable the creation of 3,000 additional housing units over a 10-year period with 75%, or 2,250 units, recommended to be affordable for households of low-to-moderate-incomes and located near activity and transit centers. This increase is on top of the 8,000 units projected in this time under existing conditions. Translating to a total of 11,000 new units built by 2030.

Some of the questions this raises for us are:

• Why does the city of Alexandria need to “broaden its toolbox” to the extent of a 142-page Master Plan/Zoning Text Amendment (2023-00005 and 2023-00007) to accommodate a 0.3% annual increase beyond the expected organic growth of housing in the city?

• Why did the city not share the extent of the expected Zoning changes, and associated costs, with the citizens before agreeing to the

Regional Housing Initiative?

• Why hasn’t the city provided a full, understandable explanation of these changes to the citizens of Alexandria? What does it mean to citizens/residents in various parts of the city?

• Is there a clear explanation of the impacts to existing infrastructure such as sewers, roads, and schools plus city services? As we are all aware, the existing infrastructure of the city is in dire need of repair or replacement. On our block alone, the sewer is outdated and was slated for replacement in 2024 – though it is not clear if that is still on track. Other infrastructure initiatives have been canceled over the years, such as the undergrounding of wire utilities.

• How does the city ensure that private developers abide by the requirement for a percentage of the units to be affordable?

This initiative does not seem fully thought out. It seems to be using the regional housing initiative as a red herring to allow the city to eliminate many zoning elements for the benefit of increased density and developers’ wish lists.

If the 0.3% increase in housing is the true goal, can’t the city develop a simple plan for accommodating this growth under existing zoning as well as within manageable infrastructure accommodations?

-Twig Murray, Harry Mahon, Alexandria

Pass Zoning for Housing

To the editor:

I urge City Council to adopt “Zoning for Housing and Housing for All.” My husband and I bought our first house in Alexandria last year. We love it, but the price tag was more than we had ever imagined we would pay for a home, much less a starter house. Now that our first son has been born, our family wants to move closer. But the cost – even for a condo – won’t let them. And I’m afraid that one day our son will be priced out of Alexandria as well. Just in the last year, nearby rental prices have skyrocketed.

Opponents of Zoning for

See EWING

Commentary

Memorable bon mots

BY ROB WHITTLE

While still an undergraduate at the University of Georgia, the great Southern humorist Lewis Grizzard returned from one of his two newspaper jobs to his fraternity, proclaiming he had just written the greatest headline in sports journalism history. He wouldn’t divulge it to his frat brothers for fear that his editor wouldn’t run it, although, as Grizzard observed, “He probably would since he was half-drunk when I left the office.”

It was the eve of the Georgia Bulldogs versus South Carolina Gamecocks football game, and, unfortunately for Georgia, one of their stars, Happy Dicks, was injured.

“Sure enough, the next day the headline ran, “Dawgs to play Cocks with Dicks out.” Personally, I can’t think of a better sports headline.

Staying with sports quotes, I saved this one from the beginning of the Commanders’ season. In an article in the Washington Post about the need for the team to start the season fast – especially for head coach Ron Rivera, who needed to prove to the new owners that he was the man going forward – he came up with this gem: “One of the things John Madden told me is: ‘You win the first one, you’re always in the plus. If you lose the first one, you’re behind.’” Rivera had to go all the way back to Madden for that brilliant exercise in mathematics?

I’ve checked the stats, and the new principal owner, despite fans’ optimism, has yet to make a tackle or complete a pass.

I’ve always loved it when people generate memorable bon mots; in fact, I keep a file on them. I’ve included below some of my favorites. You’re welcome.

“A day without sunshine is, you know, night.” – Steve Martin

“It’s like they have a different word for everything.” – Steve Martin after his first trip to France

“God created war so Americans would learn geography.” – unknown

“I’m not good at advice. Can I interest you in a sarcastic comment?” – Chandler Bing

“I never forget a face. But in your case, I’ll be glad to make an exception.” – Groucho Marx

“For my favorite. And by favorite, I mean the one I hate the least.” – greeting card spotted recently in CVS

“Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the universe.” – Albert Einstein

“The surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is that it has never tried to contact us.” – Bill Watterson

“Instead of getting married again, I’m going to find a woman I don’t like and buy her a house.” – the thrice-married Lewis Grizzard

I haven’t even gotten to Mark Twain, probably America’s greatest writer.

• “Worrying is like paying a debt you don’t owe.”

• “Politicians and diapers must be changed often. For the same reason.”

• “Go to Heaven for the climate. Hell for the company.”

• “In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards.”

• “Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed.”

• “A lie can run around the world six times while the truth is still trying to put on its pants.”

Speaking of bon mots, one night after a couple of drinks, I decided to write a song. So far, it has remained undiscovered by Nashville, Hollywood and Motown, so here is the first publishing of the refrain:

“I am a Chesapeake waterman
Fishing crabs from the Bay
The islands are receding
And the water has its way”

Shameless self-promotion. Anybody know Bruce Hornsby, or Elton John? Beyoncé? Anybody?

The writer is CEO of Williams Whittle Advertising and is the author of two historical novels, “Pointer’s War” and “Pointer and the Russian.” He can be reached at rwhittle@williamswhittle.com
**Commentary**

**ZFH will make Alexandria more affordable**

I’d like to take you on a walk around my block. In the unit block of East Walnut Street, near Grape & Bean in Rosemont, you will find a mixture of single-family homes as well as duplexes, townhouses and garden apartments. Most are owner-occupied, but there’s a decent share of rentals as well. Our block is Exhibit A of how a mix of housing types can complement each other to create a great neighborhood that’s walkable and accessible to schools, parks, transit and shopping, which the city’s current “Zoning for Housing” proposal will advance.

On a few lots, our block also illustrates the absurdity of our current zoning ordinance. Several houses have been torn down in recent years and replaced with new, larger homes that only house one family. Within that same building envelope, we have the infrastructure to support more than one family, given two Metro stations within walking distance, an elementary school with 100 fewer students than before the pandemic and other community services within easy reach.

The Zoning for Housing proposals will help make Alexandria more livable by creating greater housing opportunities in the city. Historically, our zoning ordinance has been used to exclude residential access to neighborhoods by Blacks and other people of color as well as low-income families. As a city, we demonstrate better character when we undo the segregation that our zoning ordinance facilitates by allowing a greater mix of housing types.

Zoning for Housing would free landowners in the city’s single-family zones – which represent one-third of the city’s land area – to contribute to a comprehensive housing solution. Yet even with proposed policies that would allow up to four residential units per parcel, given the high cost of land here, the estimated rate of change will be slow. The city projects 178 new units in single-family zones during a 10-year period, roughly consistent with the rate of accessory dwelling unit construction over the past two years. We can remove regulatory barriers to enable more housing without fear that new policies will eliminate our existing neighborhoods.

Other proposed changes would affect multifamily, mixed-use and industrial zones. Collectively, these steps are estimated to produce more than 2,800 units over a 10-year period and are an incremental addition to more than 10,000 new housing units the city’s existing small area plans allow.

If we want to improve our schools and public services and decrease turnover by our teachers, police officers, bus drivers and other city workers, we need to provide more housing for middle-income earners. Zoning for Housing will help.

Will my children, who are now in elementary school, be able to afford housing in Alexandria when they are adults, 10 to 15 years from now? Will people who have historically been denied home ownership and rental opportunities be afforded a better chance? Can we increase our housing supply to support more middle-income families? Will we as a community look out for the collective best interests of all of us? Yes – if we broaden housing options by adopting the Zoning for Housing proposals. It’s an important first step our community can’t afford not to take.

The writer is chair of the Alexandria Planning Commission.

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**Letters**

**Young families don’t support ZFH**

*To the editor:*

I love Alexandria. I grew up here, and three years ago, I returned here with my husband and two young children. And while I don’t love stepping into polarizing issues, I feel compelled to write this letter urging City Council to defer the vote on ending single-unit zoning, to allow more time for all Alexandria residents to voice their views on this important issue.

Young families are the lifeblood of any city, and Alexandria is no exception. We specifically returned to Alexandria once our children were toddlers because we wanted to live in a community full of other young families, with less traffic, lower stress and deeper connections with our neighbors and our city.

With the proposal’s final text only released a mere weeks ago, many residents have been deprived of appropriate time to review and be heard on such a significant proposal. This has particularly affected young families who have struggled to be heard in this debate given the rushed timeline.

Indeed, I was not even aware of the ZFH proposal until this fall, and many young families I have spoken with were not aware of it either. While the city was able to send a mailer magnet for snow plow information, it did not send a mailer about a once-in-a-generation zoning change that will not be put to a public referendum vote.

I tried to speak at the Planning Commission’s final hearings; however, my husband was out of town for work. I had no childcare Wednesday night and had to take my daughter to Girl Scouts Saturday morning.

Watching from home on Wednesday night, I saw two main groups: older residents with adult children and younger residents without children. Young families were unrepresented, no doubt for the same reasons that I could not attend.

But we want to be heard on this question. We are deeply concerned that ZFH will not achieve its goal of increasing affordability but will line the pockets of property developers at a dramatic cost to the city’s existing residents.

Already, traffic has gotten so tortuous that if we leave a minute past 7:55 a.m., my kids won’t make it to school on time by 8:20 a.m. – despite attending a school only 1.5 miles away. I expected this when we lived in Washington, D.C., but that’s exactly why we left. I can’t imagine the city willingly signing up to make it worse.

I urge Council to defer this vote so that the many young families and other Alexandria residents have time to make their voices heard.

-Katherine Goodman, Alexandria

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**Too many questions remain on ZFH**

*To the editor:*

I have been a resident of Beverley Hills for the last 41 years. I feel that it is a gift to live in this city with its sense of community and neighborliness as well as the physical environment with its abundance of trees, relatively low density and its green spaces. This is why I moved to Alexandria and Beverley Hills in particular. I am literally heartbroken that this feels under threat right now because of the city’s “Zoning for Housing” proposal.

I know that it is difficult for younger citizens to buy starter homes in Alexandria. Furthermore, with housing prices as high as they are, my husband and I could not afford presently to buy a house in Beverley Hills. We are two professionals; however, we have worked hard and for several years to afford our home. I would not have expected to live here at the beginning of our careers.

I am a social worker by profession and very sensitive to the need for affordable housing and other programs for those who are economically disadvantaged. I have also become aware that this is a nationwide issue.

However, I feel that the way the city is proposing to solve our affordable housing crisis by rezoning single-family neighborhoods is wrong and in actuality will not solve the problem.

This approach adversely impacts neighborhoods and taxes our infrastructure in terms of density, parking, traffic, schools and quality of life. Areas of concern for me are:

SEE KANE
**Letters**

**ZFH initiative is dividing us**

*To the editor:*

Running for City Council in 2021 was the experience of a lifetime – even if I did fall short. I knocked on 1,400 doors and talked to thousands more residents during the campaign.

I learned a lot. Including that there is no mandate for Council to eliminate single-family housing zoning – or to fundamentally transform our city through the zoning code. I do not recall any of my opponents now serving on Council campaigning on eliminating single-family zoning.

Look at the voter guides in the Times of May 20 and October 21, and in the Washington Post of May 23 and October 31 to see what candidates told voters they would do if elected. No mention of eliminating single-family zoning.

During the campaign, I found a common theme among voters whom I met. Alexandrians, whether they live in townhomes, condos, apartments or single-family homes, love our city because it is diverse and it is a community.

In my 24 years as an Alexandria resident, I do not recall a proposal that so threatens this sense of community as the one being rushed before Council this month. Despite Mayor Justin Wilson having campaigned on “Uniting Alexandria,” the proposal to eliminate single-family zoning is doing the opposite.

The primaries for Council are less than seven months away. Council should hit the pause button on the “Zoning for Housing” proposal so candidates can run on the issue, and let residents decide, through their votes, what path our city should take.

-Darryl Nirenberg,
Alexandria

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**We support ZFH**

*To the editor:*

We, diverse organizations in Alexandria representing faith communities, young

Alexandrians hoping for a future, tenants, immigrants and neighbors come together to state our support for the “Zoning for Housing/Housing for All” initiatives, and pairing passage with increased commitment to tenant protections and funding for existing approved affordable housing projects. We are looking to Alexandria to act boldly for housing justice on November 28.

The city of Alexandria faces a serious housing crisis, particularly for people who cannot afford to buy or rent a home here. Families, disproportionately families of color, struggle to cover rent or mortgages. Many cannot keep up with rising housing costs and are forced to relocate, either through eviction or voluntary displacement when they can no longer afford a home in their own community. As residents are pushed to the suburban and then exurban fringe, they face marathon commutes, congesting our highways and arterials, pouring increased greenhouse gas emissions, and harmful air pollution in Alexandria.

We call on the city to pass the Zoning for Housing/Housing for All initiatives and ask the city to be even bolder in meeting the needs of Alexandria’s most economically vulnerable populations – those making 50% to 50% of the exorbitant Area Median Income. The modest recommendations of ZFH are good because they can help to slow the tide of rising housing costs and the displacement those costs cause. We ask the City Council to pair the ZFH proposals with a commitment to fund all projects that have already gained approval in the city’s existing affordable housing pipeline.

We celebrate the city’s recent efforts to tell the truth about our city’s history of participating in racially and economically discriminatory zoning practices. Many of us have experienced the loss of community as long-term parishioners of our congregations are priced out, as our historic Black churches become commuter churches rather than neighborhood parishes. Our values of justice and compassion call us to support this effort to establish new zoning patterns consistent with diverse, whole communities.

The ZFH proposals equip the city with new tools to encourage committed affordable housing, open all neighborhoods to more housing options, promote reliance on public transit and reduce environmentally harmful sprawl and increase the supply of housing for everyone who wants to live and work in Alexandria. The next step is to pass zoning reforms with increased tenant protections and funding for deeply affordable housing to make homes for the many people who make less than $50,000 and are essential to the health and the success of our city. It’s time to act to be the welcoming community we say we want to be!

-Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement; YIMBYs of Northern Virginia; African Communities Together; Hopkins House; Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance; NAMI Northern Virginia; Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria; The Spitfire Club; Grassroots Alexandria; Third Street Baptist Church; Beverly Hills Community United Methodist Church; St. Joseph’s Catholic Church; Episcopal Church of the Resurrection; Fairlington Presbyterian Church; Grace Episcopal Church Alexandria; Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

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**KANE**

FROM | 18

- The proposal would rapidly increase our population, which taxes our infrastructure, particularly schools and city services.
- The eventual elimination of single family neighborhoods, which enhance the attractiveness of our city to newcomers.
- There are no checks and balances on what developers can build.

Other jurisdictions have not stepped up to respond to the Council of Governments’ recommendation to address the issue of affordable housing. I feel that we are doing the work that other jurisdictions should be taking on.

I am concerned that more cars will add to the growing congestion we already have. This will also negatively impact our tree canopy, which we are working hard to replace, because increased density eliminates green spaces.

Most importantly, I want to address the process by which the Planning and Zoning Commission, the mayor and City Council are attempting to enact this proposal. This proposal has been in the works for several years, yet was there resident input in the drafting stages?

This proposal was made openly public only two months ago in its entirety and it is quite complex; hence, there is not enough time for residents to fully understand it per se and think about the consequences, intended or unintended. This precludes thoughtful resident input now and even precludes compromise.

As a resident of the city, I feel helpless and powerless. I don’t feel that my and other individual voices matter. What happened to the ideas of consensus and compromise?

When I think about our world situation, our city comes to mind. If we cannot respect the rights and voices of individual citizens, taking them into account, how can we expect to deal with the problems of the world?

-Mary Jean Kane,
Alexandria

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**EWING**

FROM | 17

Housing argue that allowing duplexes, triplexes and quads will detract from our neighborhoods, but Del Ray has plenty of multi-family housing and that neighborhood is one of Alexandria’s finest. Just because a home has more than one front door doesn’t mean it is unattractive. And just because a family can’t afford to pay a million dollars for their home doesn’t mean they would be bad neighbors. Neighbors – just like houses – can run the gamut, and whether you like them has little to do with how much their mortgage is.

Pass Zoning for Housing and allow more people to live in Alexandria. I plan to live in this city the rest of my life and I want others to be able to do the same.

-Erica Smith Ewing,
Alexandria
Early Thanksgiving in Alexandria

This article previously appeared in the Nov. 22, 2018, issue of the Alexandria Times.

Despite conventional history emphasizing the celebration in Plymouth colony in 1621, the first documented Thanksgiving celebration by English colonists was celebrated in Virginia on Dec. 3, 1619. An expedition of 38 men under the command of Capt. John Woodlief arrived from England to the 6,000-acre Berkeley grant, now Berkeley Plantation.

Following the dictates of their sponsor, the London Company, the group declared a day of thanksgiving, promising it would be “kept yearly and perpetually ... as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God.” And they kept their promise until 1622, when the settlers were massacred in March.

Alexandria, like many other southern municipalities, was reluctant to celebrate Thanksgiving as we know it. Despite President George Washington’s proclamation that Nov. 26, 1789, was to be a national celebration, the holiday was often considered a northern tradition. However, a letter in the Dec. 13, 1839, Alexandria Gazette stated the writer, “rejoiced to find that the good old-fashioned custom prevalent in the Northern States ... was to be observed in Alexandria on Friday, Dec. 13.”

Another writer argued in 1850 that 21 other states observed the tradition, and the town’s lack of public health epidemics was as good as any to observe a day of thanks.

The religious aspect of the holiday encouraged local clergy to advocate its spirit, if not its observance. For instance, the Rev. Joshua N. Danforth of the Second Presbyterian Church, presented “A Thanksgiving Oration” to his congregants on Nov. 27, 1851. The oration was published in the Gazette the next week.

The public support for a local celebration grew so much in 1853 that Mayor John Muir declared November 24 a local holiday and recommended that local businesses close. The local response was generally positive, and three years later, Mayor George P. Wise designated November 20 a day of thanksgiving. Other Virginia cities held their own observances, including Richmond, Fredericksburg and Winchester.

The holiday did not enjoy an unopposed acceptance in our town.

As tension between the states grew, so did opposition to celebrating this “northern” tradition. In 1858, then-Mayor William D. Massey requested a day of Thanksgiving which would include closing local businesses. The Common Council voted down the request 10 to three. Some of the Council members who voted against the proposal were Benjamin Hallowell and George H. Smoot. It was the first time the Common Council had rejected a mayoral proposal for a city holiday.

The occupying Union Army reinstated the celebration of Thanksgiving in Alexandria, as early as 1861. Lincoln established the celebration as a national holiday in 1863, and Alexandria has not skipped one since.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.

Weekly Poll

Last Week

How should City Council vote at its Nov. 28 meeting on the Zoning for Housing proposal?

**41%** They should vote no to everything.  
**31%** They should pass it all.  
**25%** They should defer the proposal.  
**3%** They should pass part of it and defer the rest.

This Week

Should Zoning for Housing be decided by a citywide referendum or a City Council vote?

- A) Citywide referendum.  
- B) City Council.  
- C) City Council, only after the next election.  
- D) I don’t care either way.

November 16 Results

Where should cleaning up Alexandria's toxic waste sites on the waterfront rank among our city’s priorities?

- **38%** First. What could be more important?  
- **38%** It’s important, but public safety is more important.  
- **23%** I would put it after education and public safety.
Weekly Words

**ACROSS**
1. Like a scathing review
2. Go downhill, say?
3. Ancient foe of Athens
4. Pinnacles
5. *Secretary of state's counterpart (twins)
6. Like a scathing review
7. Ancient foe of Athens
8. Pinnacles
9. *Secretary of state's counterpart (twins)
10. Giant presence in China?
11. Helm a ship
12. Quaker products
13. Cut (off)
14. Feng ___
15. Sprints
16. *Reverses course (bull)
17. Knife in horror movies
18. Chicago mayor Lightfoot
19. Hall-of-Fame pitcher Satchel
20. Giant presence in China?
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130. Giant presence in China?

**DOWN**
1. Close buds on a text thread
2. So, so much
3. Challenge
4. Coffee shop sticks
5. Brewery barrel
6. It's presumed in court
7. BBQ rods
8. They may click in the classroom
9. Name in "Costa Rica"
10. Houses on wheels, familiarly
11. Bit of ink
12. "Easy on Me" singer
13. Nile reptile
14. Reprimand
15. Bro's greeting
16. Stay the course
17. Discoloration on a dress
18. Shirt from a concert
19. Cupid's counterpart
20. Astronaut Jemison
21. Spanish for "daddy"
22. ___ glance
23. Ranch calls
24. Pitcher's asset
25. Brouhaha
26. Swindle
27. "For ___ a jolly..."
28. Freebie at a dentist's office
29. Oui, oui: French ___ : Spanish
30. Vote into office
31. Actress de Armas
32. Apple's mobile platform
33. Pedicure digits
34. Asteroids far, far away
35. Jyn ___ ("Rogue One" protagonist)
36. Omani or Kuwaiti
37. Explosions far, far away
38. English to Greek
39. Greek to English
40. Type of TV
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DEATH NOTICES

WILLIAM VINCENT CLEARY, JR. (93), of Alexandria, Nov. 7, 2023
JAN ERIC LAGERGREN (88), of Alexandria, Nov. 14, 2023
JAMES LOCKWOOD (77), of Alexandria, Oct. 26, 2023
BLANCA ROSA MANTILLA (83), of Alexandria, Nov. 13, 2023
MOLLIE ANN MURPHY-SMITH (65), of Alexandria, Oct. 19, 2023
THOMAS JEFFERSON POWERS (48), of Alexandria, Nov. 14, 2023
PATRICK REIDY (63), of Alexandria, Nov. 9, 2023
LINDA SCHADE (74), of Alexandria, Nov. 11, 2023
DORIS STARNS (100), of Alexandria, Nov. 11, 2023
CLYDE CLAYTON WRIGHT (91), of Alexandria, Nov. 15, 2023

Solutions from last week

WILLIAM VINCENT CLEARY, JR. (93), of Alexandria, Nov. 7, 2023
JAN ERIC LAGERGREN (88), of Alexandria, Nov. 14, 2023
JAMES LOCKWOOD (77), of Alexandria, Oct. 26, 2023
BLANCA ROSA MANTILLA (83), of Alexandria, Nov. 13, 2023
MOLLIE ANN MURPHY-SMITH (65), of Alexandria, Oct. 19, 2023
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PATRICK REIDY (63), of Alexandria, Nov. 9, 2023
LINDA SCHADE (74), of Alexandria, Nov. 11, 2023
DORIS STARNS (100), of Alexandria, Nov. 11, 2023
CLYDE CLAYTON WRIGHT (91), of Alexandria, Nov. 15, 2023
The Webinar will open at 6:30 p.m.

Registration Link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zSfQlLSi5qVh5cA6J6UQ

Zoom Audio Conference:
- Dial in: 301-715-8592
- Webinar ID: 954 8758 0950
- Password: 954374

City Council (Public Hearing Webinar)
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qLkmPjJeRX3rkDLoO5z9w

Special Use Permit #2023-00082
4800 Fillmore Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to waive the sign requirements of Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance for the installation of a freestanding sign; zoned CDD #23/Coordinated Development District #23.
Applicant: Goodwin House Incorporated, represented by M. Catharine Puskar, Attorney
Master Plan Amendment #2023-00002
Rezoning #2023-00003
Development Special Use Permit #2023-10009
301 N. Fairfax Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for (A) Amendment to the Old Town Small Area Plan Chapter of the Master Plan through updates to the Land Use map to designate the property as Residential High; (B) amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone for the site from CD/Commercial downtown zone to CRMU-H/Commercial Residential mixed use (high); (C) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct a 48-unit multifamily building, including a Special Use Permit to increase the floor area ratio to 2.5 in the CRMU-H zone and a modification to the crown coverage requirement; zoned CD/Commercial downtown zone.
Applicant: 301N Fairfax Project Owner LLC, represented by M. Catharine Puskar, attorney

For the Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a Public Hearing on December 11, 2023 in the City Council Chamber, Room 2400 of City Hall, 301 King Street at 7:00 p.m.

BZA #2023-00014
1402 Mount Vernon Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for Variances to construct an addition in the required side and rear yards; zoned: RB/Residential Townhouse
Applicant: Brant Thomas Snyder & Samantha Jane Provost
BZA #2023-00005
1020 Duke Street
Consideration of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law for the May 8, 2023 BZA decision regarding the Appeal of a zoning violation for failure to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for a 100 year old building; zoned: CD/Commercial Downtown Appellant: Marc Greenberg

Further information about the BZA hearing may be obtained from the Planning Commission. The public may submit comments in advance to Molly Lambert at molly.lambert@alexandriava.gov or on the City’s website at www.alexandriava.gov/dockets.

Public Hearing will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, room 2400, second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 on the following applications:

BAR#2023-00480 OHAD
Request for addition and alterations at 809 S Columbus Street
Applicant: Erin Murphy
BAR#2023-00481 OHAD
Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 809 S Columbus Street
Applicant: Erin Murphy

Administrative Painted Masonry Policy

Proposed updates to the Parker Gray Residential Reference Guide and to the BAR Policies for Administrative Approvals in both Historic Districts.

Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD);
Parkers – Gray District (PG)

Public comments will be received at the Public Hearing. The public may submit comments in advance to Lanning Blaser at lanning.blaser@alexandriava.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Alicia Chase at alicia.chase@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711.

For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit alexandriava.gov/dockets.

PUBLIC NOTICE

DRPT FY25 PUBLIC NOTICE

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is accepting applications from qualified eligible applicants for transit, rail, and commuter assistance program (CAP) grants for the 2025 fiscal year. The state’s annual grant application period is from January 1, 2023, through February 1, 2024. Transit and CAP funds are available through multiple state and federal funding sources to support transit service, human service transportation, and commuter assistance programs in Virginia. Eligible project categories include capital purchases, administrative and operating costs, technical assistance,
Demonstration grants, and commuter assistance program costs. Funds are available for rail initiatives through the Freight and Rail Preservation program. In addition, funding to provide access to freight rail shipping for Virginia businesses is available year-round through the Rail Industrial Access program. Complete details on eligibility and the application procedures for DRPT grant programs are available online. To learn more about transit, rail, and transportation demand management funding in Virginia, visit www.drpt.virginia.gov. Applications can be submitted online at https://grants.drpt.virginia.gov/beginning December 1, 2023. DRPT is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. DRPT will also provide reasonable accommodations and interpretive services for persons who require special assistance to participate in the grant application process as required by the ADA. For accommodations, additional information on how to file a complaint, please contact our Title VI Compliance Officer, (804) 786-4440, or visit www.drpt.virginia.gov.

LEGAL NOTICE
SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON FOR PIERCE COUNTY

In the Matter of the Adoption of KENALI JAMELLE ATTIDORE (DOB: May 26, 2011)
A child under the age of eighteen.

No. 23-5-00504-6

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

TO: Reggie Harris and any other man or woman who may claim a parent-child relationship with the above-named child

The petitioner has filed a petition in this court requesting that any parent-child relationship between you and the above-named child be terminated. The child was born on May 26, 2011 in Alexandria, Arlington County, Virginia. The mother of the child, whose name was JACQUIVA CHANLE ATTIDORE when the child was born, has consented to the stepparent adoption of the child by the petitioner, who is her spouse.

The court has set the time and place of the court hearing on the petition to terminate your parent-child relationship. That court hearing will be on Friday, December 15, 2023 at 9:00 AM at Pierce County Juvenile Court, 5501 Sixth Avenue, Tacoma, Washington 98406.

As an alleged father of the child, you have the right to file a claim of parentage under RCW 26.26A or 26.26B and to seek custody of the child, to support the child, and to seek to establish a parent-child relationship.

You have the right to be represented by counsel and counsel will be appointed for an indigent person who requests counsel.

Your failure to appear at the hearing referred to above or to respond to this Notice or the Petition for Termination of Parent-Child Relationship within 30 days of the date of first publication of this Notice will result in the court entering an order terminating your parent-child relationship without further notice.

One method of responding to this Notice is to send your response to the Clerk of the Court whose address appears below and to the attorney for the petitioner at the address below by certified mail with return receipt requested.

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You are further notified that if the child named above is an Indian child and if you acknowledge paternity of the child or if your paternity of the child is established prior to the termination of the parent-child relationship, your parental rights may not be terminated unless you (i) give valid consent to termination, or (ii) your parent-child relationship is terminated involuntarily pursuant to chapter 26.33 or 13.34 RCW.

DATED and signed this 3rd day of November, 2023.

MICHELE GENTRY HINZ – WSBA #8449
Attorney for Petitioner

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While selling homes has been a passion of mine for 22 years now, it is not my reason for being. I am thankful every day, but especially this time of year, for my family and friends. I'm taking time to reflect on how fortunate we are to be able to live and thrive in these turbulent times. I am humbled when I think of all the clients I have the pleasure of working with.

As I reflect, I pray for all those in hostile places.

I hope you will be able to spend time over the holidays with those you care about. May health and peace be upon us all this holiday season and the year ahead.

- Chris Hayes

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