

October Membership Meeting  
October 12, 2021

Allan Gajadhar opened the meeting at 7 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and read the meeting expectations. Allan reminded attendees of dues payment. Allan called for a Zoom poll to vote to approve the September Membership Meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by 76% of the voters, and Allan will confirm the delegate votes later.

Announcements

Robin Stomblor from the Green Valley Civic Association asked to recognize Jesse Boeding at the meeting for her service, and advocacy for parks, sustainability, and fairness.

Allan noted the secretary, Alistair Watson, changed membership organizations with a gap in his membership. Because of the gap, there needs to be a special election for the position at the next membership meeting. Those who want to run should send their interest to Allan G. or to Acting Secretary Stacy Meyer. Nominations need to be in by 10/26/21. Nominations will be accepted from the floor as well.

Panel 1

Matt Ladd and Kellie Brown from the Arlington County Community Planning, Housing and Development Department presented a panel on “Expanding Housing Choice: Missing Middle Housing Study”. Kellie Brown presented the “Phase 1 Report – community Priorities and Concerns and Recommendations for Phase 2”.

Highlights:

The “missing middle” refers to wider choices to meet housing needs aside from traditional high rises and single-family homes, such as small lot homes, townhouses, duplexes, and multiplexes. As well, the study explores how the changes from smaller existing homes to larger homes can be positively managed. The study is in its initial phase and will take 2 years to complete, including community feedback. It will conclude with possible zoning ordinance amendments and other policy recommendations. The study prioritizes adding housing with reduced cost for seniors, young families, and essential workers. It prioritizes sustainable land use, tree canopy and investments in schools, parks, and infrastructure. The study will include design and economic analysis. The project website is [housing.arlingtonva.us/missingmiddle](https://housing.arlingtonva.us/missingmiddle), and the slides will be on the CivFed website.

John Vihstadt from the Housing Committee started the Q&A, asking about lessons learned from other locations that have incorporated missing middle initiatives, and how the planning corridors will be incorporated. Kellie stated that the Phase 1 is studying lessons learned, and Langston Corridor will be studied in Phase 2. Matt noted the other localities’ zoning has been changed very recently, and it is too early to fully understand the impacts.

Jesse Boeding asked about schools’ impact. Matt noted that will be studied in Phase 2 with the help of consultants.

Stef Pryor asked about renovation of existing properties. Kellie said that there is some addressed in R.2.7 districts. Richard Zucker said that the Multi-family Reinvestment Study (garden apartments) is ongoing and there should be preliminary recommendations at the beginning of next year.

Richard Epstein asked about the quantity community engagement. Kellie listed the upcoming scheduled engagement events, and outreach at festivals and popup events. She also stated there are 11,000 people on their listserv.

Jane Green asked if there is a risk of building housing faster than jobs. Richard replied that is primarily a market question.

Mona Steffen asked about traffic and parking. Matt confirmed that will be studied.

A question was asked about the small lot sizes. Matt said that the smallest lot size in Arlington is 5000 SF, and smaller lot sizes will be studied. John followed up by asking if this will reduce the supply of single-family houses, therefore increasing their price? Matt stated that small homes are being torn down in favor of larger houses, so the small home supply are already being reduced.

Adam Theo asked how much by-right development will be included in the study? Matt stated that would be something to be considered in Phase 2 and noted that the existing process is onerous.

Nicole Merlene asked about rental vs. buying (owner occupied). Kellie replied that the new housing types could be either, and that topic will be studied later. John Vihstadt noted that AHome program for low-income funding has been starved for funding.

Ben Keeney asked about how many people can occupy a unit. Kellie stated that sort of evaluation has not been done.

A question was asked about the names of the consultants. Matt stated those names will be on the project website.

Jane Green noted that 3-bedroom homes are scarce. Matt replied that was brought up in the Phase 1 engagement.

Mary Glass asked about the difference between small lot focus and cluster development. Instead of giant houses, a cluster of small houses could be better. Matt replied that cottage clusters need larger lots than are generally available in Arlington in the infill context.

Judith Davis asked what is done with the input the community has provided? Kellie referred to the Phase 1 process and report summary of engagement. She said there is also a more detailed report on the website.

A question was asked – is there a null option? Kellie said that Phase 2 will evaluate impacts and benefits of changes against the status quo. However, the study goal is to increase housing supply. John followed

up that there is a cost-benefit analyst for the county. Will the missing middle be something they look at? Matt answered that it is not always only a matter of cost benefit, but that some policies are viewed as investments for future needs.

Bill Braswell observed that there is resistance to missing middle along Langston Blvd and asked if it is possible to do a test case / trial area / test zone? Richard said more study is needed prior to a pilot. Kellie said 3-D models will be developed to show what these housing types will look like to help the community understand the proposal.

Suzanne Sundberg asked about aging in place. She stated there is financial pressure on people with fixed incomes when tax assessments go up. Kellie mentioned that will be part of the Phase 2 study and added that missing middle could provide more choice including accessibility options. Suzanne stated that duplexes are currently selling for \$1.2M which is not affordable. Richard said that is not an example of what is being proposed in the future which will include affordability.

Bill Walsh asked about the Dillon Rule impact on the study, and what state legislation will be required. Matt said that there used to be locations where townhouses were allowed, and those could revert. Matt said that there may be some items that are outside of the zoning ordinance and which may have limitations. Bill followed up by asking who makes the decision where these new housing types go? Matt said that recommendations from the report will guide locations.

Michael Raisin asked about the options for affordable housing. Kellie said that is not the goal of the study but may be a future option.

Mary Glass asked: are we working for the developers? Matt replied that we are looking for options other than the existing – that could also be built. Kellie stated there is a desire for more housing choice in Arlington in the community.

John thanked the panel and will follow up on a few questions there was not time to include.

## Panel 2

Nicole presented the panel on the Clarendon Safety and Innovation Zone. Chief David Povlitz from the Arlington County Fire Department could not attend due to a Metrorail issue. Dr. Aaron Miller, Director of Public Safety, Communications and Emergency Management presented the program.

## Highlights:

Public safety IT is governed as an IT project by various IT organizations. The Safety and Innovation Zone is a demonstration zone to test technology and innovation in the county's responses. It includes crowd safety, public health, and public safety.

The zone is a 12-month pilot in Clarendon, in which the traditional light fixtures are changed out with data units / sensors / and lights. The project uses "project privacy principles" and there is a privacy oversight panel. System configuration is underway.

The zone / project will incorporate “smart city applications” including counting people, weather, objects, etc. The intent is to understand how to incorporate the new technologies, and test privacy principles. There are environmental, optical (not a camera) and audio sensors. Data is handled at the edge and is not saved. Only metadata is transmitted through an encrypted network to Arlington County servers and to the dashboard. There is a secure gateway that is monitored.

The dashboard shows a heatmap of pedestrian traffic. Humidity, CO, and noise are monitored for public health studies / trend analysis.

A link to the CivFed presentation will be on the webpage.

The project webpage is:

<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/safety-and-innovation-zone-demonstration-project/>

Stef Pryor and Donald Gurney led the Q&A on behalf of the Legislative and Public Services Committees.

Don asked about how civil rights concerns reviewed and addressed such as algorithm bias, integration with other data, and the potential for this to involve into a persistent surveillance system. Aaron reiterated there is no identifiable characteristic of individuals included. Facial recognition is prohibited by Virginia. There is nothing to connect to, and there is no intention to use this system for persistent surveillance.

Stef asked if the program actually being tested by an independent auditing firm. Aaron responded that there are limits to what can be disseminated to the public. Aaron noted that the Department of Technologic Services is participating in the Center for Internet Security MISAC - Multistate Information Security Analysis Center program. That program includes network penetration testing and other security monitoring and assessment. Aaron also noted he sits on Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Coordinating Council with includes state, local and tribal governments. Stef asked again, specifically about a third-party auditor. Aaron stated that George Mason will be reviewing the data but would have to get back to Stef about an auditor.

Don asked about the implementation of the privacy principles and for examples of how that is working. Don referred to the project website for examples. Don mentioned that having the data being anonymous was one of the principles that has been put into action as noted in the presentation. Holly Hartell followed up by saying the privacy principles were developed prior to the project based on best practices, and that this is the first opportunity to test the principles. There is a privacy impact assessment that is ongoing. There will also be a risk mitigation report as part of that assessment.

Stef asked about the vendors benefit from participating in the project – could Comcast make changes to the project? Don stated the hardware is a unit that was installed by Arlington County. The light pole is also owned by Arlington County. No changes to the hardware are anticipated. The network traffic passes through the Arlington County system, so Comcast cannot impact the encryption. The optical sensors are not capable of images other than the ones indicated in the presentation.

Nicole summarized questions from the chat. The first question was why is this project being done? Aaron said that the environment and technology is rapidly changing and in response governments are using a “buy, try and decide” approach prior to issuing an RFP for services. Fredericksburg and Blacksburg, Virginia are doing similar pilot projects. He said that the temperature sensors have been deemed to be not worthwhile, but sensors to improve pedestrian safety are worthwhile. The data such as pedestrian traffic flows could become public in a safe way.

Nicole asked about sound data collection: is it decibels or can conversations be heard? Can this be used to measure noise complaints? The current system doesn’t seem to work. Aaron confirmed there are only decibel readings. This system will provide verifiable data for noise complaints.

Nicole asked if the dashboard or the system could be hacked / changed in the future. Aaron stated that there is not the opportunity to change by design of the units. There is also active monitoring and other network security layers to increase security.

Bill Walls asked about the ROI from the project and the benefit to the community. Aaron stated he believes the biggest ROI will be in pedestrian safety. Small business owners will be able to use the data. Finally, the tested privacy policy framework is a critical component of the project. All data will be publicly accessible.

Allan Gajadhar asked 1) what privacy assurances do you offer in regard to an expanded program? 2) is the PIA tied to the NIST framework? 3) how will you distribute the data, what is publicly available? Aaron said the data will all be publicly accessible. The project is based on the NIST framework and other best practices. The privacy framework is vetted – changing the use, sensor, or any other aspect of the project must go back through the privacy assessment, the change and reassessment of the impact of the change on the whole.

Adam Theo asked if this could result in a smaller police force? Also, what budget does this project come out of? Aaron said the police will not make operational decisions based on this project. If they did decide to do that, the change in use of the project would be reviewed. Public Safety projects come through capital expenditures.

Nicole asked about other examples. Aaron said there is not a good model out there for Arlington. Arlington has a specific use case and needs from other localities.

Nicole and Allan G thanked Aaron for the presentation. Aaron said he responds to emails.

No old business. New business:

Todd Truitt, a delegate from Waverly Hills Civic Association, asked about a membership application for Arlington Parents for Education. Is this being approved? Allan G mentioned it will be discussed on Sunday. Allan will reach out for additional information if required.

Stef Pryor made an announcement for volunteers for committees. Allan reiterated the request. Allan announced the upcoming Board meeting. There was a vote to end the meeting with no opposition. Allan adjourned the meeting at 9 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Meyer  
Acting Secretary