

October 31, 2023

To: Keith Osborne (Richmond Planning and Zoning Director) and Virginia Clarke (Chair, Planning Commission)

Thank you for your continued work on the village zoning. Unfortunately, I am not available to attend tomorrow's Richmond Planning Commission meeting, when the draft Village Residential Neighborhood Districts will be discussed again. In my absence, I would appreciate you sharing my letter during the meeting with the other Planning Commission members. I am most interested in the southern neighborhood area, but I think my comments pertain to both districts.

My major concern pertains to section 3.12.6. d) Multiple Structures on a Lot - whereby two principal structures hosting residential uses may be developed on a lot, I continue to believe that the best course of action is for two principal structures to be revised as a PUD, whereby the DRB can apply all the relevant standards and provide a thoughtful review of the project. I certainly understand that the allowed use of two principal structures will benefit the developer, but it will end up costing the buyers resources and needed legal representation in terms of addressing easements, use of green space, driveway repairs and plowing, etc. I have witnessed neighbors not speaking to each other due to those matters not being addressed adequately when the property is subdivided, a scenario which applies equally in the case where two principal structures get separated in ownership with two owners. When that is in place, all of the steps and provisions that would apply to a condominium would apply as well. I do appreciate that the draft now specifies that certain conditions must be met, which address some of the issues that I have mentioned here (and previously at a planning commission meeting). However, subsection iii. for footprint lots, seems ill-conceived. Any plan for footprint lots should definitely be reviewed by the DRB as a PUD, as the legal and professional support needed for that option is well beyond what can be handled as a permitted use by right.

Have you gotten any guidance from the Vt. Dept. of Housing & Community Development on the matter of building heights, affordable housing, and additional density? Has DHCD provided new guidance documents that help towns like Richmond, which are significantly smaller than some larger towns that have the infrastructure in place and geographic conditions to allow for MAXIMUM housing development.

There are certainly other aspects of the drafts which bear thoughtful review, and I regret that I cannot attend. I will look at the meeting minutes and will attend future meetings when the zoning is discussed, hopefully without schedule hitches on my part. I do want to add that I think the VRNN and VRNS should remain as separate zoning districts. The zoning standards rightfully vary in some degree from each other. The areas were settled in different times and with different scales, for instance, the northern neighborhood had the shirt factory in close proximity with worker housing within that area.

I attended the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and listened to the work being done in the town of Jericho, I was struck by how productive the dialog seems to be within Jericho where they engage in taking steps based on what can be accomplished with myriad perspectives and limited local resources. In Richmond, we are all attempting to follow the state mandates and support more housing in a way that works within our existing neighborhoods. Please know that I fully endorse the general standards associated with Act 47, but am concerned the Planning Commission is looking at some changes that go beyond what will work well in our neighborhoods or even for future homeowners, such as the permitted two principal structures.

Thank you for your attention.

Cathleen Gent, Thompson Road