

Dear Virginia and members of the Planning Commission,

As some of you know, I have been attending a few Housing Committee meetings and a recent Planning Commission meeting, as a Richmond resident who is concerned about the housing crisis in our state (and particularly in our county).

I am not able to attend tonight's meeting, but I wanted to share some thoughts after attending these past few meetings.

I live in one of the very few condominiums that exist in town. The only way I was able to buy a home in town, as a single person back in 2007, was because of the presence of an available condominium and a VHFA loan. I don't believe any sizable condo project has been built in Richmond since the 1990's and few units go on the market each year; those that do are being sold for a surprisingly high price. I probably would struggle to buy a home in town if I wanted to today.

I strongly support the growth of multifamily housing in the Richmond village center. While the project on Jolina Court that you are considering is not a condo project, it does provide a very rare opportunity for Richmond to grow its housing base with a multifamily building or buildings. Therefore, I believe the town should be approaching this from a perspective of "what can we do to get as much density as is reasonably possible in that space" rather than "what should we make the developer do in order to get more density."

It's very expensive to build housing in any form right now, and it's hard for developers to make the economics work without a certain number of units. This project is critical for Richmond. I would encourage everyone involved to work together to get the density as high as is reasonably possible, and to help the developers get this project under construction as soon as possible.

I say this without knowing the developers or if they have been easy or hard to work with. I understand why development must be planned carefully and be appropriate for the town.

I recently witnessed a close friend, in the process of divorce, find it quite challenging and expensive to find an apartment in Richmond so they could live in the same school district as their child's school. I just hope we can provide some much needed multifamily housing in Richmond sooner than later, and this location seems to be a pretty rare opportunity for that.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Best regards,

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