

15205 Wetherburn Drive
Centreville VA 20120
February 4, 2021

The Honorable Peter F. Murphy, Jr. Chairman,
Fairfax County Planning Commission
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552
Fairfax, VA 22035
plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov

Re: ZMOD Meeting February 3, 2021, Q&A Session

Dear Chairman Murphy,

I am speaking to you today as a private citizen, as I have previously sent to the Commission, as the President of the Board of Trustees, Virginia Run Community Association, a resolution denouncing the provisions of Zoning Ordinance Modernization Project (zMOD).

Like many others interested in zMOD amendment, I have been watching recent events on Fairfax County Government's Channel 16. While I appreciate opportunities to submit written and verbal citizen comment, I am extremely saddened that public testimony is banned following the Q&A session. Where is the opportunity for one-on-one discussion and clarification of the matter at hand? Last evening's land use public hearing in Fairfax County was one of the most disturbing and miscarriages of the board's responsibility to obtain and understand public opinion. There are many throughout the County who were disenchanted by the outrageous conduct and comments of Don Elliott. His attitude toward the citizens of Fairfax County confirmed my worst fears as displayed by his arrogance and anti-citizen attitude perspective, especially coming from one of our paid consultants, namely Clarion. Being a consultant myself for the past 25 years, my managers would have had me relieved of my duties for that type of conduct. I wondered has his arrogance and anti-citizen feelings tainted the Fairfax County staff, Boards, and Commissions? Or has the Fairfax County staff, Boards, and Commissions in some way shaped and be reflective of Clarion's attitude? Not sure – both are damaging to the character of Fairfax County.

Like many, including yourselves, stayed up past 1 AM to hear comments from the citizens regarding zMOD. Throughout the staff's presentation of zMOD and again last evening the Fairfax County staff cheerful and somewhat defensively, congratulate themselves and Clarion on a "job well done" and the "great work done by all". From these types of comments, it appears that the staff and Clarion passionately believe that they know best, and that citizen participation reflects the "NIMBY" attitude of Fairfax County residents. Nothing can be further from the truth. Citizen participation and dissent must not be belittled, brushed off as NIMBY, and that community objections to the major policy changes in ZMOD are immaterial. From our point of view, we want to protect our investments, minimize the impacts of overcrowding, unregulated signage, parking, building of ADUs, WDUs, flagpoles, sheds, etc. It

appears, that staff and Clarion sees only their side of zMOD, they do not get it. We do as residents who made a major investment in Fairfax County and our communities.

In conclusion, I believe that most Fairfax County residents realize the Planning Commission is under the gun from the Board of Supervisors on this project. There are many, as you heard throughout the hearings, who believe that the County does not have the authority to push zMOD through during the pandemic for “emergency legislation”. I ask that you postpone any further discussion and decision to a time where public input can be received by the Commission in face-to-face discussions. Where real question and answer sessions can be held where commissioners are able to ask for clarification on the issues that concern county residents.

In the meantime, I am happy to answer any questions, if it would help. I thank you and your fellow commissioners for your patience with a difficult topic. I appeal to you and your colleagues to keep an open mind and allow time for citizen input and further discussion. In closing, please stay safe and healthy.

Joseph W. Johnston
15205 Wetherburn Drive
Centreville, VA 20120