

Bluemont Civic Association

Representing Neighborhoods in and around Arlington Traditional School, Lacey Woods Park, Bon Air, Fields Park, Balls Crossing, West Ballston, and all along the former Bluemont Division of the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad

P.O. Box 5134 Arlington, Virginia 22205
bluemontcivic.org

July 18, 2008

Dear County Board Members;

This letter is to inform the Board that on Wednesday, May 28, 2008, the members of the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA) voted unanimously to oppose the May 20, 2008 proposed change to the Zoning Ordinance relating to Accessory Dwellings (AD).

There are many potential enforcement issues relating to AD's; homes with AD's that are sold and fall off the County enforcement radar, ensuring owner-occupancy, noise, overcrowding, or parking adequacy and restrictions. The Bluemont neighborhood already contains a number of non-owner occupied rental homes. Whereas some rental property owners maintain their properties and have responsible renters, others allow their properties to deteriorate and rent to groups of unrelated individuals in order to obtain the highest rent possible. These rental houses frequently become nuisance properties: multiple cars reduce the amount of street parking for nearby homeowners; trash and debris are strewn all over the yards; lawns and exteriors are unkempt; overcrowding; and loud, raucous parties and other disruptive activities frequently take place late into the night. At one property, the renters publicly bragged on a blog about continuing their noisy partying after police officers had repeatedly asked them to turn the music down and disperse the crowd.

Calls to code enforcement often go unreturned (perhaps this is the reason for the low number of recorded complaints), and police officers often tell residents that they have few corrective alternatives available to them. Whether the problem is inadequate ordinances or a lack of manpower, the result is that the County seems incapable to address problems at existing legally rented properties. The BCA is not confident that the County will properly control problems with future ADs when it cannot control existing problems, particularly since the County is not planning to add additional enforcement personnel.

Therefore, the BCA considers the (AD) proposal to be too difficult for the County to enforce to the standards that BCA homeowners demand from the County.

Regards,

Judah dal Cais
President, Bluemont Civic Association