Arlington’s
Accessory Dwelling
Ordinance

Alexandria's Housing
Affordability Advisory Committee
March 2, 2017
Background and History

Housing Commission releases recommendation (January 2008)

Community Outreach (January-July, 2008)
• Articles in newspapers
• Article in The Citizen
  • Goes to every Arlington household
• Notices in the Arlington Insider
  • Goes to almost 9,000 persons
• 2 Community Forums
  • Broad outreach including flyers in libraries and recreation centers
Meetings on Proposal (January-July, 2008)

58 Meetings on the proposal were held, including:

- 28 Civic Associations
- 4 Civic Federation meetings
- 18 County Board Advisory Group meetings
- 2 Community Forums
- 4 Others, e.g. the Committee of 100
- 2 County Board meetings
Background and History

• Community Feedback
  • Overcrowding
    • Limits on County’s ability to address problems in existing housing
  • Parking
  • Changing character of single-family neighborhood
  • Fear of large number of ADs being created
  • Lack of control on affordability of units

• Approved in 2008

• Very restrictive ordinance

• Only 20 approved since 2009
Background and History

Affordable Housing Master Plan

• Identified ADs as an existing tool to:
  • Provide an adequate supply of housing
  • Help older adults age in place
  • Provide a typically lower-priced housing alternative
  • Allow homeowners to receive additional income

• Recommends review of ordinance to encourage greater use

• Board directive during adoption was to look into adjustments over the next two years
• Published informational article
  • What is currently allowed
  • Benefits of ADs
  • Why the County is reviewing the ordinance

• Hosted two design galleries with the Alliance for Housing Solutions (AHS) to get input on detached ADs

• Started working with AHS and Civic Federation to develop community process

• Staff working group identified ordinance issues
Accessory Dwelling Working Group

• Purpose:
  • Advisory group to staff
  • Determine changes to ordinance

• Scope:
  1. Review current ordinance and its effectiveness
  2. Best practices
  3. Examine ordinance issues that limit usage
  4. Provide guidance on draft recommended changes
  5. Input on community engagement plan
Outreach Strategies

- Outreach/feedback strategies will include the following:
  - Resident survey
  - Community forum
  - HOME Show and Expo
  - Outreach to commission/community meetings
  - Housing News and Notes newsletter
## Timeline

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
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<td>Review current ordinance and effectiveness</td>
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<td>Review best practices from other jurisdictions</td>
<td>Housing Commission/staff</td>
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<td>Examine ordinance issues</td>
<td>Housing Commission/staff</td>
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<td>Provide guidance on draft recommendations</td>
<td>Housing Commission</td>
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<td>Recommendations to commissions (Housing, Planning, Aging, ZOCO)</td>
<td>County staff</td>
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<td>Request to Advertise</td>
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<td>County Board consideration</td>
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<td>Resident survey</td>
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<td>Educational presentation to civic associations, website, other organizations</td>
<td>Civic Federation/County staff/Housing Commission</td>
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<td>Public forum</td>
<td>County staff/Housing Commission</td>
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<td>Housing News and Notes (housing e-newsletter)</td>
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<td>Civic group outreach (AHS, Civic Federation)</td>
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Accessory Dwelling Provisions

- In Arlington, an Accessory Dwelling is an independent dwelling unit that:
  - Has its own kitchen and bath;
  - Is within a single family detached house;
  - Is designed, arranged, used or intended for occupancy by not more than two persons; and
  - Has a separate address & entrance.

- AD must meet building code requirements for a separate unit, e.g. fire separation, fire egress, separate heating and air handling.
## Accessory Dwelling Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Approved by County Board</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Unit</td>
<td>Interior ADs only</td>
<td>Unable to turn a detached garage into an AD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of House</td>
<td>Allow in single-family houses only.</td>
<td>Townhouses are not allowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size Limits</td>
<td>Interior: Maximum of 750 sq. ft. or 1/3 the size of the house and AD combined, whichever is less. Exterior: N/A</td>
<td>If converting a space, like a basement, that is larger than 750 sq. ft. then you need to partition off part of the space.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner Occupancy Requirement</td>
<td>Yes; no waivers allowed, owner has to have lived in home at least a year</td>
<td>New home builders would like to be able to create single-family homes with an AD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum Occupancy</td>
<td>Maximum of 2 occupants</td>
<td>Doesn’t allow for a couple with a young child.</td>
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</table>
## Accessory Dwelling Elements

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<tr>
<td><strong>Deed Covenant</strong></td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Obtaining financing for a rental unit is problematic if the bank charges commercial rates rather than the residential rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Certificate of Occupancy and Affidavit with Tenant Info</strong></td>
<td>Required at initial occupancy and whenever new tenant(s) move in</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parking Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Parking survey required; parking requirements if over 65% parked</td>
<td>No process devised to perform the required parking survey should someone wish to have an AD who has no off street parking</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Design Guidelines</strong></td>
<td>-AD door cannot be on the same side of house as the main entrance. -AD on corner lot cannot have its entrance visible from street -Exterior stairs to 2nd floor dwelling cannot be visible from the street</td>
<td>Single family homes are allowed to have two entrances on the front side of the house, but you can’t have the AD door on the same side as the main entrance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Limit</strong></td>
<td>28 per year</td>
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Questions?

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