

Holmes Run Acres Meeting Summary 1.27.2021

zMOD:

On January 27, 2021, the members of the Holmes Run Acres (HRA) Work Group met virtually through the Webex platform. The first half of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion on zMOD, Fairfax County's Zoning Ordinance Modernization Project. The discussion was led by project managers Carmen Bishop and Casey Judge. Members of the community Work Group had previously raised concerns about changes being proposed in zMOD, specifically regarding Accessory Living Units (ALUs) and Home-Based Businesses. A major concern raised is the proposed change to how ALUs are approved. Currently an ALU requires a Special Permit with a public hearing, but the new proposal allows interior ALUs to be approved administratively by the county. Work Group members raised the issue that these are small homes on large lots and these proposed changes could make it easier to add ALUs and that could dramatically affect the character of the neighborhood.

Another concern regarding the ALUs is how the proposed changes could affect parking in the neighborhood. If more ALUs are approved in the neighborhood, it could increase the number of cars needing to be parked. Members of the Work Group noted that if extra parking is increased, that could decrease the amount of vegetated area and increase impervious surfaces and driveways. Again, it was noted that the landscaping of Holmes Run Acres is an important part of what makes the neighborhood unique and one of the reasons for examining the potential HOD is to preserve the feel and character of the neighborhood.

More Information on zMOD

To view the entire discussion including the zMOD presentation please follow this link: <https://youtu.be/b6K0R3iSBw4> The zMOD discussion begins at the 5:00 minute mark.

More information including charts showing the current zoning regulations and the proposed changes can be found here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/zmod/alu-faqs.pdf>

And:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/sites/planning-development/files/assets/documents/zmod/hbb-faqs.pdf>

The entire zMOD webpage can be found here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zmod>

And if you would like to reach out to the zMOD team directly with questions or concerns please e-mail them at dpdzmodcomments@fairfaxcounty.gov or call them at 703-324-1314 (TTY 711)

Design Guidelines

The next presentation was by the consultant group EHT Traceries, who will be drafting the design guidelines in consultation with the county, Work Group, and the Architectural Review

Board (ARB). EHT Tracerics gave an introduction on their company and the work they will be completing for the potential Holmes Run Acres HOD. Their work includes developing draft design guidelines, coordinating with the Work Group and the public, and incorporating that input into the guidelines. EHT Tracerics also discussed that the design guidelines are recommendations not regulations. Any regulations for a potential HOD would go into the Zoning Ordinance which is part of the continuing discussions help by the Work Group. In contrast, the design guidelines are there to aid homeowners when making modifications to their homes. The design guidelines will also be used by the ARB in discussions with property owners if they required to come to the ARB. Work Group members brought up concerns that the design guidelines might be too detailed, and not what is needed for the neighborhood. Staff explained that the detailed guidelines are based on the Secretary of Interior Standards which are the industry practice. However, the guidelines are just that, guidelines. The design guidelines cannot require a certain material be used or a certain brand of material be purchased. The goal is not to freeze the neighborhood in time, but to find ways property owners can modify their structures while retaining the character of the home and the neighborhood.

To watch the entire discussion and presentation on the design guidelines please follow this link: <https://youtu.be/b6KOR3iSBw4> and the discussion begins at the 58:20 mark.

The Work Group finished the meeting by bringing up concerns that they felt communication from the county was lacking and that there needed to be a more robust effort. Work Group members noted that there are conversations happening often on the neighborhood listserv but are not always up to date with the most recent information and where the county is in the process. County staff acknowledged that that is a concern and agreed to work on creating new avenues for outreach. This includes working to have better ways for community members to be able to ask questions directly, to provide more frequent updates, and answer FAQs that can be pushed out to the larger community.

The Work Group concluded with scheduling their next meeting for February 24th at 6:30pm. This meeting will also be held via Webex. The link for upcoming and past meetings can be found on the Holmes Run Acres page here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/holmes-acres-run-hod>