



MEMORANDUM

TO: Alexandria City Council (CouncilComment@alexandriava.gov)

FROM: The Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance (NVAHA)

DATE: February 21, 2023

RE: File # 23-0803, Samuel Madden Homes

My name is Jill Norcross, and I live at 11956 Grey Squirrel Lane in Reston, VA. I am in my second month as the Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, or NVAHA as we are known. NVAHA promotes healthy, sustainable and equitable communities that meet the diverse housing needs of Northern Virginia residents. We do this by:

- Advocating for public policies and adequate financial investments to develop and preserve housing that's affordable;
- Building political will to advance affordable housing through better understanding of the interplay between housing, health, equity, and economic development;
- Partnering with underserved communities to lift their participation in our civic discourse;
- Calling for the deconstruction of land use systems and policies that perpetuate inequities, and the allocation of resources to address the disparities created by these systems;
- Conducting research on housing needs and policies to promote inclusive, equitable communities in Northern Virginia.

In the past, NVAHA typically has advocated for sound housing policy, and not necessarily for specific projects.

However, for your consideration, I would like to register my support of the Samuel Madden Homes redevelopment project, which is founded on award-winning housing policy, best practice development goals, and innovative partnerships.

Residential Multifamily Zoning (RMF Zoning)

As you are aware, in 2019, Alexandria amended its zoning ordinance as a result of a comprehensive and culturally inclusive community planning and engagement process. This award-winning residential multifamily (RMF) zone provides a substantial density incentive to induce landowners to preserve or produce affordable housing.

These project partners, ARHA, Fairstead, Mill Creek and The Communities Group are proposing to use the RMF zone to allow substantial new density to turn this 66-unit townhome community into 532 total units, 326 of which will be committed affordable and 206 market rate units. Of the committed affordable, 161 units will serve residents earning under 30% AMI. In addition, this zone requires assistance and protections for existing residents who are temporarily relocated—including a right to return when the new development is complete—so that redevelopment can occur.

Best Practices

The project partners underwent an intentional community engagement process seeking input from current Samuel Madden Home residents. In addition, the project will use sustainable building practices and seek green-building certifications.

Innovative Partnerships

Additionally this project proposes to work with trusted community service providers, ALIVE! providing food security services and Hopkins House providing quality child care as essential services for residents co-located in the community.

This project appears to be an easy one for the City Council to approve. We are behind in our regional affordable housing production goals and we support this zoning change to the RMF zone to create additional committed affordable and market rate units, using best development practices in partnership with experienced partners and trusted community service providers.

Thank you for this opportunity for NVAHA to share our support for the Samuel Madden Homes redevelopment.



**Carpenter's
Shelter**

At The Hubert N. Hoffman, Jr. Center for Homeless Families

930 N. Henry Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
t: 703 548 7500
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United Way #8228
CFC #87293

CarpentersShelter.org

February 6, 2023

Mayor Justin Wilson
Vice Mayor Amy B. Jackson
Councilman Canek Aguirre
Councilmember Sarah Bagley
Councilman John T. Chapman
Councilwoman Alyia Gaskins
Councilman Kirk McPike
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of the Council:

As a next-door neighbor to this project, Carpenter's Shelter strongly urges approval by the Planning Commission and the Alexandria City Council of The Samuel Madden Homes redevelopment. We offer our strongest support based on the broad merits of the project, and in particular, its addition of affordable housing within the city. We bring the following points to your attention:

- Alexandria has experienced a marked loss (nearly 90%) of market-affordable housing to rising rents or demolition/conversion to luxury housing. The supply of affordable housing in the City is extremely limited.
- Approval of this project affirms the City's commitment to racial equity by supporting quality affordable housing in this neighborhood where minority communities have lived for decades. Relocating to another area of the city is not acceptable when redevelopment of this site is possible and desirable.

Living in Alexandria is becoming increasingly unaffordable to many of those who grew up and work in our City, including the vast majority of City employees. It erodes our sense of community and exacerbates traffic and parking problems when employees cannot afford to live near where they work.

Carpenter's Shelter is proud to be a community leader in preventing and ending homelessness. Homelessness is, in large part, due to the unavailability of affordable housing. One of the biggest delays to getting shelter residents rehoused is finding somewhere to live that has a reasonable rent relative to their income.

In conclusion, we ask that the City Council once again demonstrate its long-term commitment to affordable housing in Alexandria and approve the Samuel Madden Homes project as a source of increased affordable housing in our community.

Sincerely,

Shannon Steene
Executive Director

c: Carpenter's Shelter Board of Directors

February 23, 2023

The Honorable Mayor Justin Wilson
Alexandria City Council
Alexandria City Hall
301 King St.
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mr. Wilson:

On behalf of the Executive Board of ALIVE! please consider the following as our written testimony in support of the redevelopment of the Samuel Madden Homes.

For more than 50 years, ALIVE! has provided food, transitional housing, basic furniture and housewares, and emergency financial support to help families in crisis pay for medical bills and utilities. Founded in 1969 as Alexandrians Involved Ecumenically by 14 faith communities in response to rising levels of poverty, ALIVE! has grown to 49-member interfaith congregations. It works with many community partners, and government agencies to reach people in need.

At the end of 2021, the Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority (ARHA) selected Fairstead, Mill Creek Residential, and the Communities Group to work with the agency to reimagine and redevelop the Samuel Madden public housing site to create new affordable and mixed-income housing, community resources, and public open space. Since the selection, the team has been working with ARHA, the City of Alexandria, residents of the Samuel Madden Homes, and community stakeholders to refine the development plans.

ALIVE! recognizes the redevelopment of the Samuel Madden Homes as an opportunity to extend our reach to serve more people facing poverty and food insecurity. Traditionally, ALIVE! distributes free bags of groceries (produce, chicken, eggs, bread) at three outdoors locations once a month on Saturday mornings, and through outdoor pop-up food distributions throughout the month. This proposed redevelopment will allow for the creation of a free food distribution outlet, or a "food-hub". The food hub concept creates a safe and inviting space for people to come access food and expands the hours when people can seek assistance. It is a holistic approach to food security. In other words, this development will help us create a one-stop-shop for the community and will put people in need first by inviting them inside to find help.

ALIVE! serves all people and this space will be available for any city resident who needs food and support services. For those who live in the neighborhood and in new development, and those in adjacent areas. Poverty impacts all people and all neighborhoods have people in need, Old-Town Alexandrians are no exception. Communities thrive when all people are welcomed and feel comfortable in their environment. Since this food hub will look similar to a traditional grocery store

it will help to reduce the stigma associated with seeking food assistance, and will create a space for service navigators and volunteers to connect with our neighbors in need.

Further, the level of food insecurity is on the rise in Alexandria, and the emergency food benefits for low-income families through SNAP that were put in place during the pandemic are about to expire. Being a part of the new vision for the Samuel Madden Homes will help ALIVE! grow its impact and reach even more families in need throughout Alexandria. Through our food hubs, ALIVE! volunteers and staff build relationships to help people thrive. This will give us a central location and allow more people to access food in a safe and welcoming environment reflective of the nature, spirit and generosity of our citizenry.

In our current location, people enter for groceries and leave connected to other support services, such as rental assistance, educational, workforce, and health care services. The space in the new development will do the same.

ALIVE! is also proud to be in a location that serves people in other ways, including having an early childcare center, Hopkins House, with nearby space. ALIVE! imagines there will be opportunities to engage families in gardening, healthy eating and more. The need is evident. Since the pandemic, ALIVE! has expanded from serving about 400 families a month to hitting a peak of 5,000 during the height of the pandemic. For a short time, this number leveled to about 3,000 households, but the reality of decreases in SNAP benefits and increased costs are again impacting the numbers of households who need some level of assistance, and ALIVE! is once again serving nearly 5,000 households monthly. Food insecurity can be temporary, or recurrent. Our goal is to provide a place where we hope that by providing the very basics, people can focus on what will make them thrive and feel whole.

We are proud to be part of this project with Fairstead, Mill Creek Residential and support approval by this body.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Ayers, MPA
Executive Director

To: Mayor Wilson and Members of the City Council
From: Ellen Mosher
324 N. Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
Date: February 24, 2023
Re: Docket Item 13 - 899 and 999 North Henry Street – Samuel Madden Homes

Regarding the Planning Commission's edit of condition 43 which allows the applicant to submit with the final site plan a parking study to determine eligibility in the RPP program, this edit is in conflict with the Residential Permit Parking for New Development Policy Approved by City Council June 13, 2017.

At the Planning Commission hearing February 7, 2023, staff stated the applicant did not want to pay for the parking study therefore they opted not have one done. The entire DSUP review process proceeded without it. However, at the Planning Commission hearing, the Planning Commission edited condition 43 allowing the applicant to submit a parking study after the Planning Commission and City Council's DSUP review, therefore this edit is in conflict with the policy. (*See below*). Please remove the Planning Commission's edit of condition 43 since it is in conflict with this policy. Thank you for your consideration.

Residential Permit Parking for New Development Policy

Approved by City Council June 13, 2017

Purpose:

This policy outlines when residents of new development should be ineligible to obtain residential parking permits.

Policy:

Future residents of a development within an existing residential parking district with more than 10 units that is reviewed through an SUP, DSP or DSUP are *not eligible* for obtaining a City issued residential parking permit when either of the following conditions exist:

1. The average on-street parking occupancy is 85% or higher at the time of approval.
2. More than 50% of the total occupied ground floor street frontage is a non-residential use.

Additional Details:

Average On-Street Occupancy:

- Average occupancy will be determined based on parking conditions surveyed prior to the development's review by Planning Commission and City Council (if an SUP or DSUP).
- Parking occupancies will be reviewed with the transportation study for the development during the assumed peak hour and day of the week for the area. Specific survey times and blocks to be surveyed will be determined during the transportation study scoping process.
- The average occupancy will be taken of the number of spaces occupied over the number of spaces surveyed for all applicable block faces within one block of the development. Along block faces without delineated parking spaces, the applicant will assume that a parking space to be approximately twenty (20) feet of curb length, and avoiding restricted areas (e.g. fire hydrants, proximity to intersections, etc.). The Director of T&ES or his/her designee may adjust block faces to be surveyed to address specific circumstances of the parking near the proposed development.