

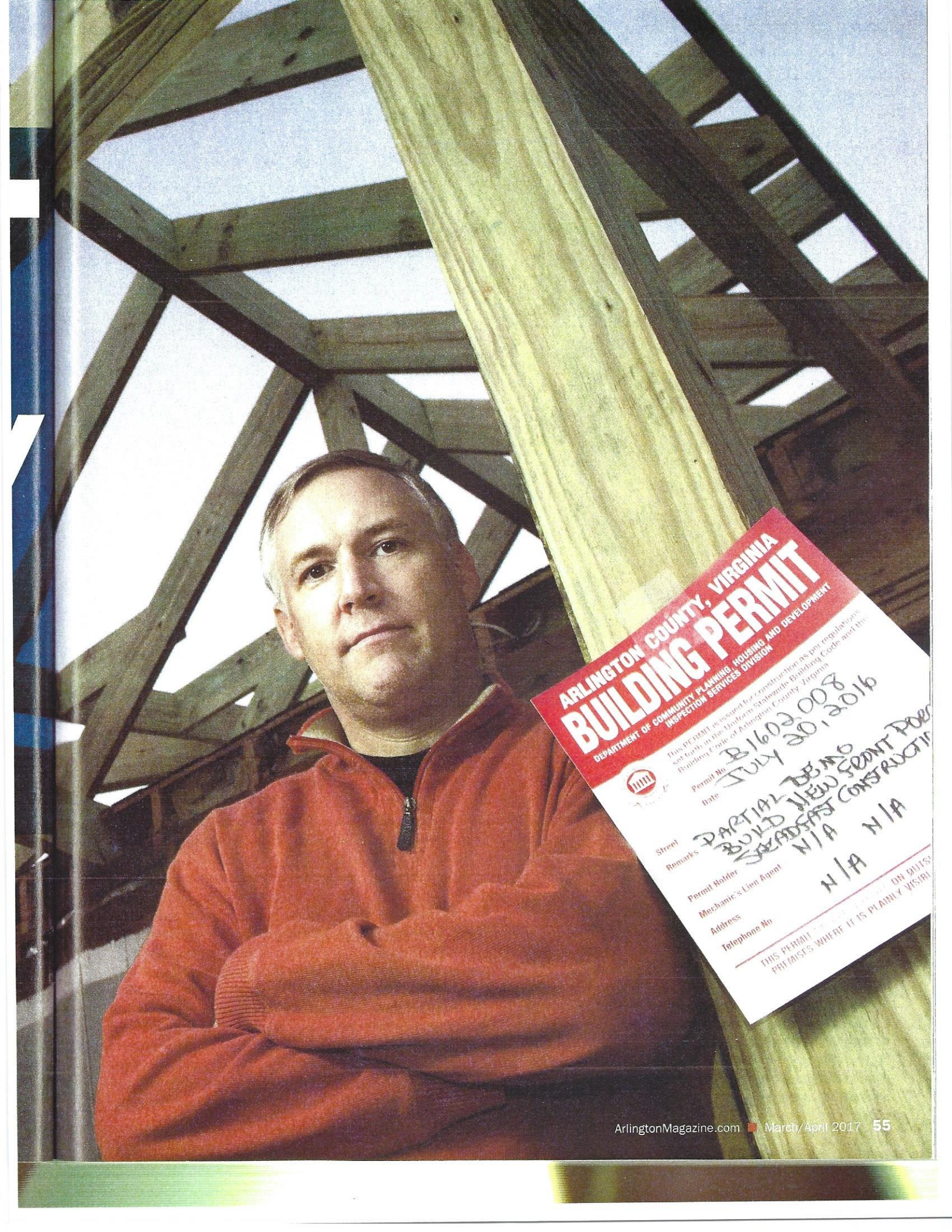


PERMIT PURGATORY

Want to fix up an older Arlington home? It may be easier said than done. Here's why.

by Emily Schwartz Greco | Photos by Liz Lynch

Rock Spring resident Ken Robbins, whose home improvement project came with some unexpected hiccups



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
BUILDING PERMIT
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING, HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT
INSPECTION SERVICES DIVISION

This PERMIT is issued for a contractor as per regulations set forth in the Uniform Statewide Building Code and the Building Code of Arlington County, Virginia

Permit No. **B1602-008**
Date **JULY 20, 2016**

Street **PARTIAL DEMO**
Remarks **BUILD NEW FRONT PORCH**
BRACKEN CONSTRUCTION

Permit Holder **N/A**
Mechanic's Lien Agent **N/A**
Address **N/A**
Telephone No. **N/A**

THIS PERMIT IS TO BE KEPT ON DISPLAY AT ALL TIMES WHERE IT IS PLAINLY VISIBLE

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W

hen Payam Fahr became the owner of the Sears Catalog house that had belonged to his mother for three decades, his first priority was to rescue the Ashton Heights bungalow from the brink of condemnation. In October 2015, just a few months after he had made the place habitable enough to move in, he received a notice of violation from an Arlington code enforcement inspector. But the problem had nothing to do with his recent renovations, the vast majority of which were internal. A woodpecker had poked a hole in one of the pylons holding up his front porch, leaving it chipped and the paint peeling.

Taking a closer look, Fahr realized that the wooden porch columns were rotting, so he decided to replace them altogether with new ones—the same size—made of a more durable composite fiberglass. “I wanted to make an investment that would surely outlast the house,” says Fahr, a mechanical engineer. He soon learned that this seemingly basic repair job would require a crash course on the Catch-22 that is the county’s zoning ordinance as it applies to a large share of Arlington’s older homes.

Fourteen months later the new columns still lay in his yard awaiting installation due to a permitting holdup. It turned out that Fahr’s porch—which had been built along with the house in 1920—was closer to the curb than the rules allow. Getting permission to replace its pylons required a building permit. But before he could get a building permit, the county’s zoning office told him he needed a use permit from Arlington’s Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) that would essentially grant an exception to the rules about curb distance. And to obtain the use permit, he needed to commission and submit professional drawings, pay a fee and then

wait several months to plead his case at a BZA hearing.

That wasn’t the end of it. The process of applying for the necessary permits revealed other zoning issues on his property, including a shed and an air-conditioning unit that the authorities deemed too close to his lot’s outer edges. His use permit was contingent on rectifying those problems as well.

“It’s a very steep learning curve. I had to take off work four or five times,” says Fahr, whose house has only 960 square feet of living space, but is worth about \$675,000 due to its prime location near the Virginia Square Metro station. “I had to get the plat done three times. It’s as if the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing. You can get punished for doing things the right way.”

CASE STUDY

PAYAM FAHR

Neighborhood: Ashton Heights

Home built: 1920

Home purchased: 1986 (Fahr obtained the house from his mother in 2015. She purchased it when he was a child and had been using it as a rental property.)

Project: Refurbishing a deteriorated front porch and replacing its rotted pylons, which county inspectors had cited as a code violation. He needed a use permit to do so because the porch, which was original to the home, was closer to the front curb than the county zoning ordinance allows. The property was found to have other nonconformities, including a shed that was encroaching on the next-door neighbor’s lot and an improperly located air-conditioning unit.

Building permit first sought: November 2015

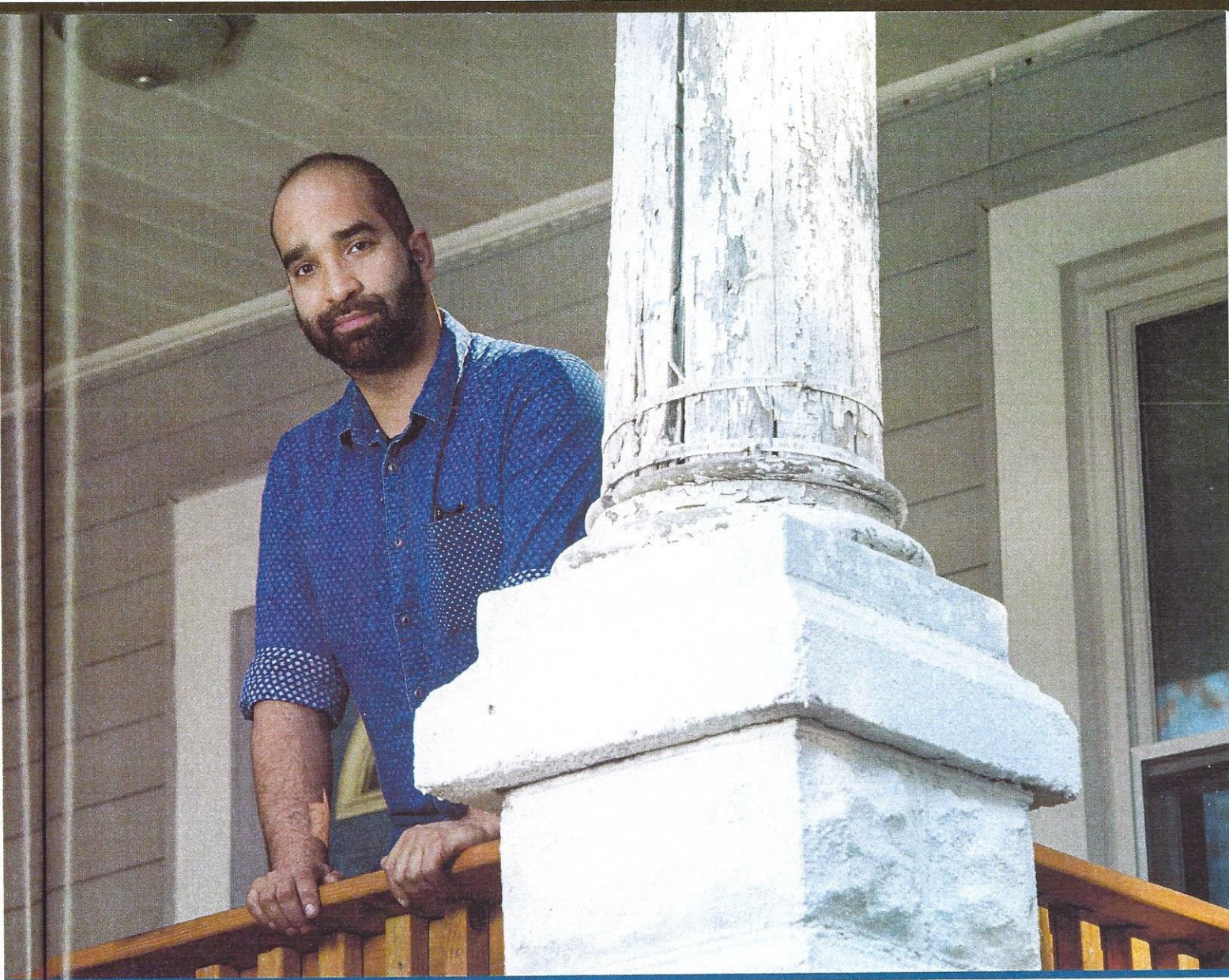
BZA hearing: September 2016

Status: Fahr applied for a building permit in January 2017 and expects to complete his project in early 2017.

Estimated project cost: \$9,000

FAHR’S EXPERIENCE IS hardly unique. About half of Arlington’s 27,500 detached single-family homes were built before the county overhauled its zoning ordinance in 1950, and therein lies the rub, says Arlington real estate lawyer Barnes Lawson. The revised regulations set standards that were at odds with much of the county’s existing housing stock, thus planting the seeds for procedural headaches that plague well-meaning homeowners to this day.

For example, the 1950 ordinance revamp established a 5,000-square-foot minimum lot size (a little more than a tenth of an acre) for residential properties. As of 2005, roughly 1 in 5 single-family homes in Arlington were situated on lots that are considered “noncon-



forming” because they are too small by the ordinance’s standards, according to the county’s own data.

The same ordinance decreed that single-family-home lots must be at least 60 feet wide—a move that consigned many of the houses in Arlington’s older, more compact neighborhoods to nonconformity. Fahr’s lot in Ashton Heights is one such offender: It spans only 35 feet from one side to the other.

Other zoning changes enacted in 1950 rendered thousands of existing Arlington houses too close to the curb, or too close to their side and rear fence lines, or lacking sufficient “frontage.” Countless more Arlington properties have fallen out of sync with the rules in recent decades through renovations and additions.

Owners of nonconforming homes are free to live in or sell their properties. But as hundreds of residents like Fahr have discovered the hard way, this de facto grandfathering has limitations where home improvements come into play. When the balcony railings, front steps or porch columns of a nonconforming home begin to deteriorate after decades of wear and tear, its owners must make unsavory choices. Do nothing and risk paying a fine for a crumbling structure that poses a safety hazard. Skip the proper permitting channels on a home repair project and face the possibility of having to pay a penalty and start over. Or suck it up and navigate the bureaucracy that is required for “new construction” that can objectively look like anything but.

Can’t Arlington’s elected officials simply vote to change the rules? According to County Board chair Jay Fisette, doing so is not as simple as it may seem. “Any time you refresh the zoning ordinance you have to do it carefully and inclusively,” he says. “We’re always trying to assess the unintended consequences.”

What kinds of unintended consequences? “Once you approve a change, it applies to everybody,” cautions Deborah Albert, one of Arlington’s principal planners and the staff member tasked with overseeing the drafting of all ordinance amendments. “It may be totally reasonable for a modest home on a nonconforming lot to encroach an extra six inches into their front setback, especially if that’s consistent with

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what all their neighbors are doing. But it may not be appropriate if their neighbor tears down their modest house and maxes out their height at 35 feet, maxes out their lot coverage and builds a new house in that same vein. You're not going to have one set of exceptions that apply to old houses and another set of exceptions that apply to new houses."

AT FACE VALUE, some hurdles required for the simplest exterior improvements seem to defy logic, says Rock Spring resident Ken Robbins, who in early 2016 discovered that he needed BZA authorization to replace the front deck on his nonconforming home with a porch. The construction was delayed six months when the county demanded that he obtain a use permit because of setback issues—even though the porch he sought to build was nearly identical to one just a few doors down.

"I was in the Army for 20 years and I respect authority," says Robbins. "I used to teach a class to cadets at West Point about bureaucracy. It is important to have, but it can easily creep away from leaders. This process has become too onerous for homeowners. We have a great county government, but if they don't want people to tear down their houses they should make it easier to fix them up."

Local architect Bob Braddock, principal at Red House Architects, is sympathetic. He says he's heard similar complaints from clients, adding that after all the procedural hassles, such projects are almost always approved anyway. "Porches allow people to be the sentinels of the neighborhood. They're a universal good and inherently social," he says. "Arlington County is pro-porch. I've never seen them turn anyone down."

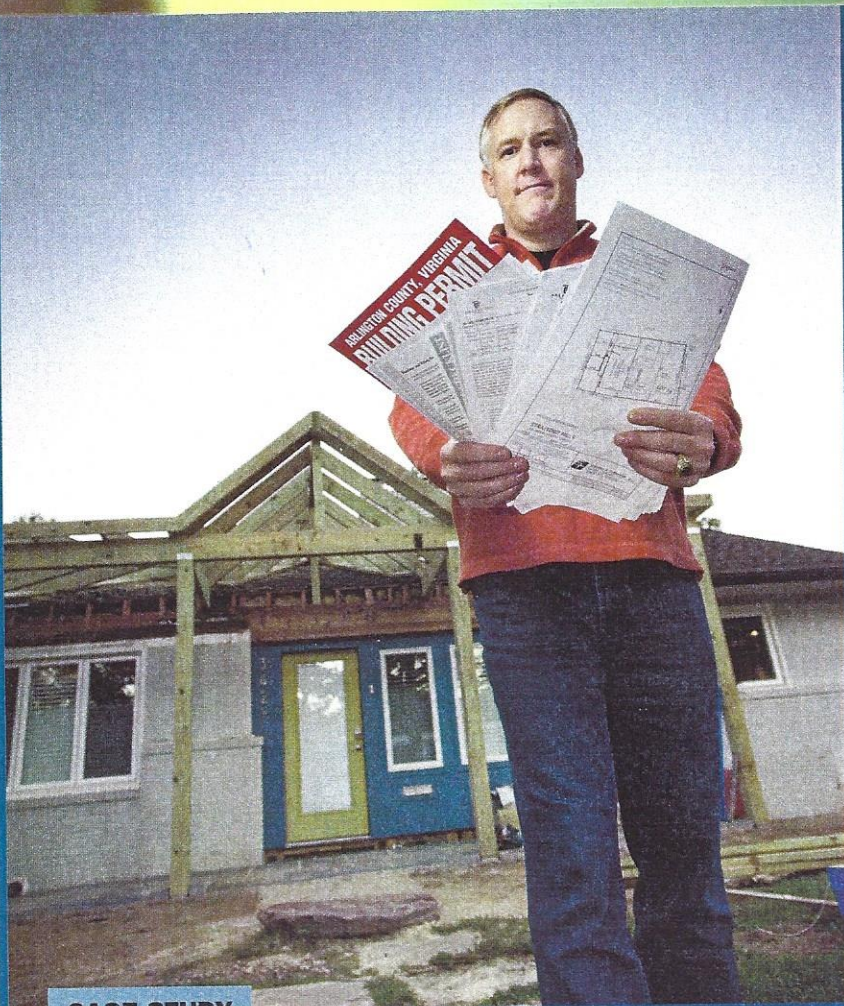
Still, the wait time can be a deterrent. If, as the owner of a nonconforming house, "you tear your porch down, you lose your right to rebuild it unless you get a use permit," says

real estate attorney Lawson, who represents roughly 33 clients per year at Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax BZA hearings, and sometimes serves as an expert witness in other cases. "If it's been there for decades, why can't you just replace it?" he says, echoing a common refrain from his clients.

Adding to homeowner peeves is the reality that all BZA applications enter the same pipeline—whether the request involves swapping out a splin-

tered porch or completely razing and replacing an older home with a new build—and the wait time for a hearing is at least two and a half months. Homeowners seeking permits can spend hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of dollars on fees and professional drawings with no guarantee that they'll be allowed to move forward.

They're also required to seek buy-in from their neighbors, insofar as BZA approval is contingent on determin-



CASE STUDY

KEN AND HEIDI ROBBINS

Neighborhood: Rock Spring

Home built: 1954

Home purchased: 2015

Project: Replacing a front deck with a covered front porch roughly the same size. Doing so required a use permit because the overhang above the porch would extend three feet closer to the curb than the zoning ordinance allows.

Building permit first sought: February 2016

BZA hearing: July 2016

Building permit obtained: July 2016

Work began: September 2016

Project completed: December 2016

Estimated project cost: \$35,000

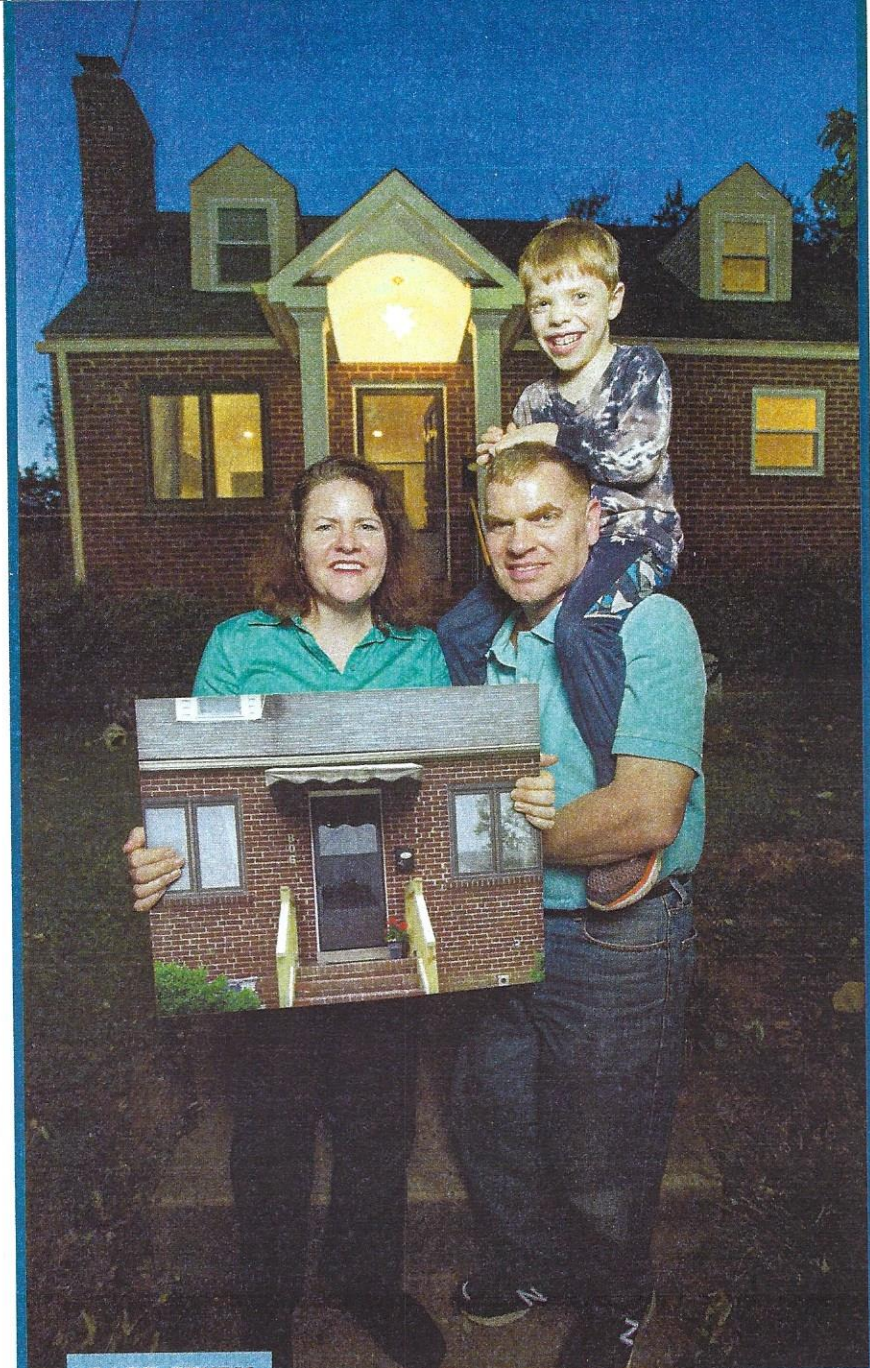
ing whether the proposed changes will inconvenience or harm neighbors or alter the character of the neighborhood. (This requirement is usually a formality, but feuds between neighbors can delay the approval of construction permits.)

Charles Smith, a labor lawyer, has served on the Arlington BZA since 1999. Like the other four members of the panel, he is a volunteer. He says that he does the work because the process, while arduous for all involved, is necessary: "To whom much is given, much is required. I have the patience for it because I'm a communitarian and a nerd."

STILL, HOMEOWNERS may find their patience tested by the red tape.

Take Andrew and Julie Feltman, who in December 2015 purchased a fixer-upper in Arlington's Bluemont neighborhood. After months of interior renovations, they were ready to move into the house with their young son. Their contractor was just putting the finishing touches on some exterior improvements—installing porticos over the front and side stoops that they had carefully designed to match the character of their street. Previously, their side entryway had lacked any shelter altogether, and the front door had been covered by an awning the couple considered ugly.

That's when county inspectors halted the work for reasons that, to the Feltmans, seemed like an exercise in semantics. Arlington classifies awnings as "temporary" structures—whether they're made of long-lasting copper or plexiglass, or from shorter-lived canvas or aluminum—whereas porticos are considered a permanent extension of the roof. As such, the porticos were subject to setback restrictions that hadn't applied to the awning. Though the new overhang above the Feltmans' front door occupied about the same amount of space as the awning had, it was deemed closer to the curb than zoning rules allowed. And the side over-



CASE STUDY

ANDREW AND JULIE FELTMAN

Neighborhood: Bluemont

Home built: 1953

Home purchased: 2015

Project: Building porticos over their front and side stoops, one of which replaced an awning. The project required a use permit because the porticos would be closer to the front curb and to the adjacent neighbor's property than the zoning ordinance allows.

Building permit first sought: March 2016

BZA hearing: June 2016

Building permit obtained: June 2016

Work began: July 2016

Project completed: August 2016

Estimated project cost: \$20,000

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CASE STUDY

TERRY AND ELAINE EBY

Neighborhood: Douglas Park

Home built: 1950

Home purchased: 1990

Project: Replacing a side porch with an enclosed breakfast room and mudroom plus a more accessible entryway. It required a use permit for two reasons: They were proposing an enclosed structure, and that structure would be only three feet away from the neighbor's property.

Building permit first sought: October 2015

BZA hearing: July 2016

Building permit obtained: October 2016

Work began: October 2016

Project completed: Anticipated in early 2017

Estimated project cost: \$35,000-\$40,000



Elaine and Terry Eby (far right) with the neighbors who testified on their behalf

hang was technically too close to their next-door neighbors' property line.

While their neighbors voiced no objections, overcoming this hurdle dragged out the Feltmans' renovation by another five months. "It just seemed like with the difference between the letter of the ordinance and the spirit of the ordinance being so small, it should not be a big deal," Andrew Feltman says, adding that the proposed changes constituted not only an aesthetic upgrade, but a safety improvement. "During the winter, as the snow melted, there was an iceberg on the steps because the awning didn't offer enough protection."

On the evening of his scheduled BZA

hearing in June 2016, Feltman waited more than two hours for his turn. Once he was up, the board took three minutes to consider and approve his request for a use permit. The county issued the building permit he needed soon thereafter.

SOMETIMES THE county's zoning staff will give an application a thumbs-down before it is even subject to BZA consideration. In the fall of 2015, Douglas Park residents Elaine and Terry Eby found their blood pressure rising when they learned their project could be flagged for denial. The couple had already put two additions on the house they bought in 1990 and figured

they knew the drill. But the third time was a nail-biter.

The impetus for their third renovation began when their next-door neighbor replaced an enclosed porch with an open one, leaving the side of their house that faced the neighbor's property more exposed. For privacy reasons, the Ebys decided to enclose and expand their own porch to create a mudroom and breakfast room, at the same time adding a separate entryway that would make the house more accessible for aging in place.

But then they encountered a hurdle: like most Douglas Park properties, their lot fell short of the county-mandated width—which meant that

the 4-by-18-foot addition they were proposing would technically be too close to their neighbor's property, requiring BZA authorization.

"It takes a lot of time and money to go through those hoops and it's a gamble," says Elaine Eby, a senior scientist at the Environmental Protection Agency. Paying for professional drawings, a new plat, legal advice and application fees without knowing whether they would be allowed to build the addition, she says, added up to nearly \$2,000.

After county staff recommended denial, the Ebys hired Lawson for guidance. They deferred their scheduled BZA hearing, amassed more than 30 signatures from neighbors and obtained a letter of support from the Douglas Park Civic Association president, along with a letter from a local real estate agent stating that their renovation sought to prevent a decline in property value that might otherwise stem from the home's newfound lack of privacy. They then collected photographs of other neighboring homes (for context and to indicate precedents) and brought six copies of everything to the BZA hearing: one for each of the board members and one for the clerk.

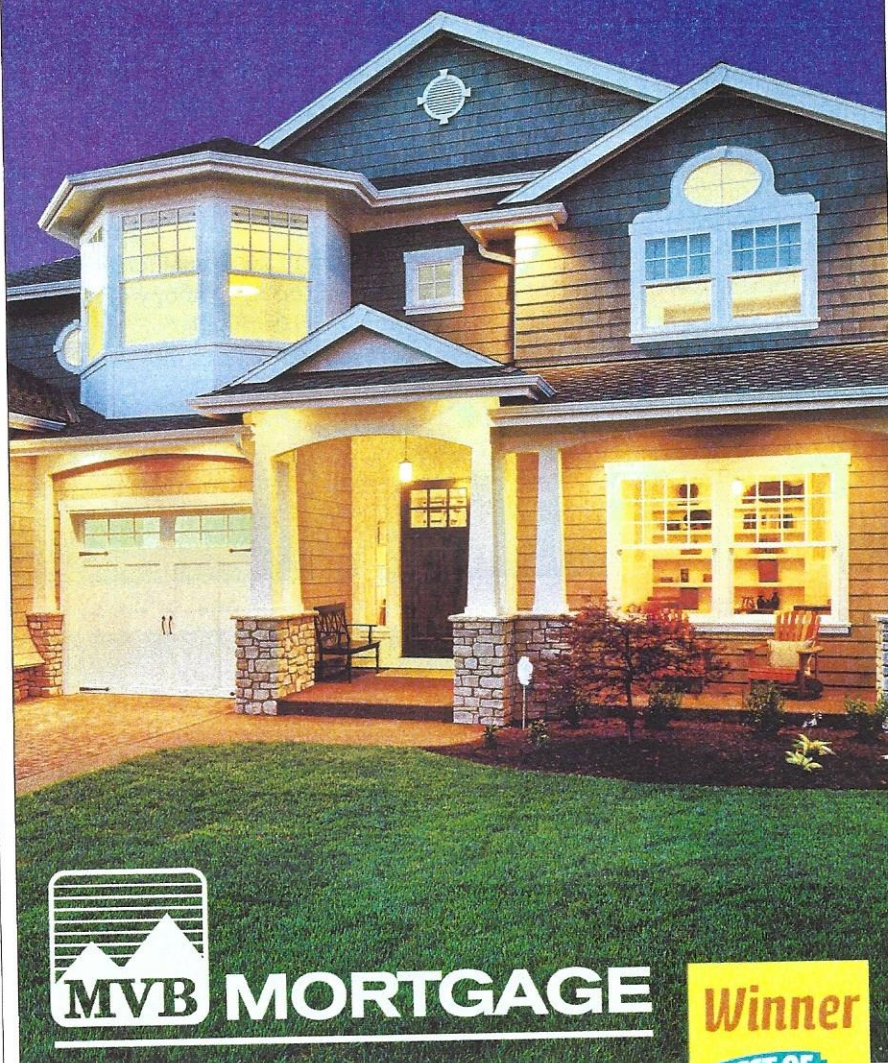
"I just didn't want to fail," says Elaine, who considers her home a "sanctuary."

Once Elaine had made the couple's case and six neighbors had spoken on their behalf, the BZA deliberated for less than three minutes and granted a use permit. To celebrate, the Ebys invited their neighbors to join them in a champagne victory toast.

HOW MANY SINGLE-FAMILY homes in Arlington are nonconforming? Arlington County doesn't track that data. Its 2015 *Report on Status of Nonconforming One- and Two-Family Dwellings* lacks even a rough estimate, indicating only that "many" homes fall into this category. Law-

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T H I S I S A N A D V E R T I S E M E N T



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son, the real estate attorney, estimates that at least half of all detached Arlington homes are at odds with the zoning ordinance in one way or another.

Will that change? Arlington's zoning regulations, like all zoning regulations, are intended "to amortize the existence of nonconformities," over time, the report acknowledges.

"Amortize," a word commonly used in reference to paying off debts, stems from a root that means "to kill." At least in theory, that would suggest phasing out properties with lots that are too narrow, porches that are less than 25 feet from the curb, and basements with bang-your-head-on-the-ceiling clearances.

One antidote to nonconformity is to raze and replace old properties with new, compliant ones, as often happens. From 2000 to 2014, builders demol-

ished an average of 103 single-family homes per year in Arlington, according to county statistics. But teardowns have stirred neighborhood tensions as bigger, taller houses have replaced smaller, older homes, and local leaders say they want to protect the jurisdiction's architectural heritage.

"I'm personally not a fan of oversized homes," says County Board chair Fissette. "The vision I have, as part of our sustainable future, is to see the reinvestment and protection of the character and tree canopy of our residential neighborhoods."

Preserving Arlington's older housing stock can yield economic dividends, adds County Board vice chair Katie Cristol: "We have a good supply of modest single-family homes and I think they play an incredibly important piece in sustaining Arlington's

middle class. That's absolutely one of the things we have thought about a lot: How do you ensure that there are homes at a price point that families can afford and seniors can afford to stay in such that we can have a full diversity of community?"

HOMEOWNERS SEEKING to beautify their older abodes by embarking on extensive (and expensive) renovation projects can also find the BZA process onerous, especially when they encounter confusing and conflicting information on their way to a hearing.

In September of 2016, Greg Mullan and his wife were preparing to defend plans to gut and enlarge their Ashton Heights house. Shortly before their scheduled BZA hearing, the couple and their architect realized that county zoning staff had failed to advertise all

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the specifics of their proposal (as is required, for public comment) in advance of their hearing. The architect reported the error and was told that the BZA needed more time to consider the Mullans' application, even though the homeowners were not at fault.

Mullan attended the hearing anyway. "I wasn't going to *not* show up after months of waiting," he says. "They need to step up to the plate and provide a certain level of customer service. Not only is it financially prohibitive to buy a home in Arlington, it's ridiculous in terms of the time and money [required for property improvements]." The BZA granted the Mullans a use permit a month later.

County officials are aware of the system's logistical shortcomings. Cristol says constituents often tell her that they "went through an entire zoning, permitting and inspections process, only to be told at the finish line that there was some sort of permit they hadn't gotten or some sort of inspection they hadn't yet scheduled." (Many homeowners lament, for example, that shifting environmental requirements, such as those involving grading to prevent water runoff, often result in unexpected delays and significant added costs.)

"I am very interested in improving administrative processes," Cristol says.

Some procedural fixes are already underway. To educate homeowners about the BZA process, the county is posting more information about nonconforming houses to its Building Arlington website (building.arlingtonva.us) and is reaching out to civic associations and homebuilders.

Next up, the county plans to begin facilitating permit applications online to spare homeowners many of the trips to the permitting office now required to present documents and pay fees in person. The goal is to



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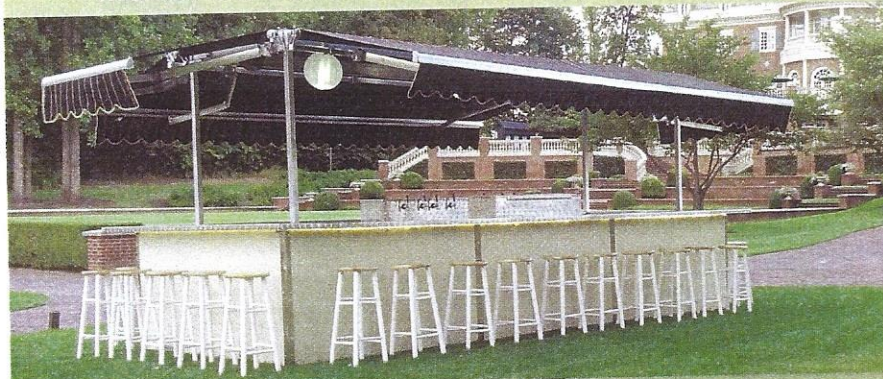

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have the online process up and running by the end of 2017, says Helen Duong, a project team member for the One-Stop Arlington Initiatives, a countywide effort to make it easier to do business with the county government.

The backlog isn't as bad as it used to be, notes BZA member Smith: "It's gotten better over the past 15-20 years."

County data corroborates his claim. Between 2000 and 2016, the BZA's caseload declined, despite a construction boom that increased the number of housing units in Arlington by nearly 25 percent over the same time period. Whereas the panel heard 214 cases in 2000, the average in 2015 was 170.

Particularly helpful to the owners of Arlington's older houses was a package of zoning changes approved in 2015 that determined, among other things, that interior renovations on nonconforming houses no longer require use permits or variances. (Variances require homeowners to prove that they would experience hardship if denied authorization for a given project, while use permits do not.)

Yet there's no plan to do the same for minor exterior renovations, says county planner Deborah Albert.

Some observers believe that many homeowners could be spared the hassle of going through this process if county staff were empowered to exercise more discretion. "If they want to do something about this, the county board needs to rewrite the ordinance to let the zoning administrator make determinations that don't need to go before the BZA," architect Braddock says.

But Arlova Vonhm, Arlington's zoning administrator, downplays that possibility. It's "not really our role to make a value judgement," she says. "We are just supposed to uphold and enforce the rules as they exist. It's pretty straightforward."

As Albert puts it, "Only a legislative body has discretion" to change the ordinance's language.

At the same time, county leaders acknowledge that there could be more at stake than bypassing a few bureaucratic headaches.

"When you create too many regulatory obstacles to modest home improvements, you could actually be exacerbating the trend in teardown and rebuilding," Cristol says.

Regulatory excess can also make homeowners reluctant to enhance their properties, says Andrew Feltman.

"I don't want to go through this process again," he says. "Just because of the time it wastes." ■

Emily Schwartz Greco's Arlington home was built in 1947. She has never sought a use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

BEFORE YOU REBUILD

Thinking about making exterior modifications to an older Arlington home? Read this first.

What's the difference between a use permit and a building permit?

Use permits are required for land and building uses that fall outside the rights granted by the county zoning ordinance. A use permit is issued by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and essentially authorizes an exception to the rules. Building permits are issued by the Permitting Office & Inspection Services. They are required for most home renovation projects (conforming or not) to ensure that the work is not in violation of safety, environmental, energy and accessibility codes. Owners of nonconforming properties typically must get a use permit or variance before they can receive a building permit.

What is the BZA?

The BZA is a quasi-judicial panel of volunteer citizens residing in Arlington. The panel is tasked with approving or denying use permits and variances, and hearing appeals to the county zoning administrator's decisions. The BZA determines whether a new build or addition may be exempt from zoning ordinance restrictions relating to building height, lot coverage or setback distances. The BZA also reviews cases involving fences, driveways and structures like garages and sheds. The Arlington County Circuit Court appoints BZA members to serve renewable five-year terms. Many other states and the District of Columbia rely on similar systems.

When does it meet?

Arlington BZA hearings are generally held monthly (except January), starting at 7 p.m., at 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Room 307. It takes at least two and a half months to schedule a BZA hearing, regardless of the size and scope of your project.

Who should attend a hearing?

Either the homeowner or a representative, such as a contractor, lawyer or relative, must be present and speak. Hearings are open to the public and anyone can attend. Neighbors and organizations who support or oppose relevant projects may also speak.

How does the BZA reach decisions?

A majority voice vote by the five-member BZA is required for project approval. Should any members be absent and the board deadlocks, applicants may defer for a second shot. BZA members are briefed on cases beforehand by county planning staff. The board issues rulings on the spot. Homeowners may appeal BZA decisions to the Arlington County Circuit Court.

Before you apply for a permit:

- » To avoid construction delays, determine in advance whether your project will require a use permit or a variance from the BZA. (Again, variances require homeowners to prove that they would experience hardship if denied authorization for a given project, while use permits do not.)
- » Finalize your design before you apply to avoid the risk of having to reapply, pay more fees and wait for another hearing. Be aware that you must consent to having county staff enter and photograph your property, and that your application, including some personal information, will be posted online.
- » Tell your neighbors that you are seeking BZA approval for work on your home so they will not be alarmed when the county posts notices and sends letters alerting neighbors about your application. Let them know that county staff will visit your street to take photographs.
- » To strengthen your case, collect signatures from neighbors on a petition supporting your project and submit it to the BZA.

What else should my application include?

- » Paperwork (both written and drawn) explaining what you want to do and why.
- » A fee, usually ranging between \$348 and \$541 for basic renovations and repairs. (The fee for a permit to build a new house is \$2,689.)
- » A plat of your house, drawn to scale by a professional. To meet official requirements, the plat must be less than 10 years old and show all improvements to the property. All dimensions must match. In most cases, plats should be on legal-size paper, although the document size may depend on the paper used by the surveyor who drew the plat. Submit your plat in person to the county zoning division to make sure your application is on track.
- » Complete floor plans for all levels of the house where work is to be done. Cross-sectional framing plans are optional but encouraged.
- » Architectural drawings of the intended project. The county advises but does not require applicants to hire a professional architect or designer. However, submitting poorly made drawings can mean having to reapply, pay more fees and wait

again. In some cases, the staff may also recommend that you hire a surveyor.

One to two weeks before your hearing:

- » Watch for guidance from the county zoning office, which will recommend approval or denial of your project.
- » Get ready to address the recommendation in your remarks.
- » Prepare to bring neighbors who support your project—especially if county staff have recommended to the BZA that it deny your application (more on that below).

On the day of your hearing:

- » Review the agenda and practice your remarks.
- » Arrive by 7 p.m., regardless of the schedule. Your case could be heard earlier (or later) than you think. Simple cases may be over within five minutes. Complicated cases can take an hour or longer for the BZA to deliberate.
- » Since hearings can last as long as five hours, have contingency plans to stay as late as midnight. Make flexible travel and caregiving arrangements.

Other tips for advance prep:

- » Before you prepare your remarks, observe a hearing or listen to a recording of one posted to the BZA website (commissions.arlingtonva.us/bza).
- » Write an outline of what you will say, keeping in mind that applicants get up to five minutes to speak, regardless of their case's complexity.
- » Address why your project will not inconvenience neighbors or pose a health or safety risk; is consistent with the character of your neighborhood; and will not significantly reduce the property's foliage.
- » Consider mentioning how long you've lived in this home and when you moved to Arlington; why you love your house; and why you are repairing or upgrading the property. Offer assurances that your project will not negatively impact property values or threaten the public welfare.
- » If you are seeking a variance, be sure to explain why being unable to proceed with your project would pose a burden to you.
- » Some BZA permits are granted with little deliberation, but don't assume your proposal is certain to be rubber-stamped. BZA members reject a dozen or more requests per year. If county staff have recommended to the BZA that it deny your application, bring neighbors to vouch for your plans. Individuals who support or object must keep their comments to two minutes. Neighbors may also submit letters of support up until two weeks prior to the hearing.
- » Ask your civic association for a statement of support. Present photos to show precedents for similar projects in your neighborhood. Consider hiring a real estate lawyer and consulting with a real estate agent. »

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After your BZA hearing:

- » Applicants receive project approval or denial letters within two weeks.
- » If your use permit is approved, you must obtain a building permit from the county before you can move forward with your project. Include with the building permit application a copy of the staff report recommending approval—or the approval letter itself.
- » Once you get a building permit, your project must be completed and approved by an inspector within six months. If you take longer than a year to obtain a building permit, the process starts over.
- » Note that projects that include the construction of walls require county staff to perform a wall-check survey once the foundation walls are poured and before any wall framing is constructed. At this point, homeowners must submit their wall-check plat to the zoning division staff.
- » Once the project is completed, the homeowner (or their contractor) must bring a new plat to the county zoning

office that proves the work complies with BZA-approved setbacks and conditions. All plats must be certified by a licensed engineer or surveyor and must be to scale.

- » Homeowners whose applications are denied (and neighbors who object to approvals) may appeal BZA decisions to the Arlington County Circuit Court.

For more information:

Arlington Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development
Zoning Administration
commissions.arlingtonva.us/bza
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contactzoning@arlingtonva.us

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"Top Dentist" *Washingtonian Magazine* 1997-2017

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— Amy C., Arlington Yelp Review

"Best of Virginia" *Virginia Living Magazine* 2014-2016



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