

HOUSING COMMISSION

DRAFT MEETING NOTES – March 10, 2022

Attendance			
	Present		Present
Arthur, Ben	Y	Serfis, Karen	Y
Berkey, Eric	Y		
Bray, Holly	Y		
Browne, Paul	Y	Staff:	
Edwards, Laura Saul	Y	McMillen, Alex	Y
Hemminger, Michael	Y	Planning Comm. Liaison:	
Jackson, Angel	-		
MacBeth, Kellen	Y		
Montgomery, Anika	Y	Disability Advisory Comm Liason	
Norris, Haley	Y	Ray, Doris	-
Rubalcava, Sara	Y		

Held in: Virtual public meeting held through electronic communication. This meeting was recorded and is available on the Housing Commission website.

Other Staff Present: Marie Randall, Russell Danao-Schroeder, Joel Franklin, Richard Tucker and Sarah Pizzo of the Housing Division and Brett Wallace of the Planning Division, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD).

Public Comment

No public comment.

Approval of Notes

Eric Berkey moved approval of the February 3, 2022, meeting notes, Kellen Macbeth seconded, and the motion passed 9-0, with Commissioner Rubalcava abstaining.

2025 Clarendon Boulevard

Public Comment

Stuart Stein spoke on behalf of the Radnor Fort Meyer Heights Civic Association. He stated the proposed design is incompatible with the Rosslyn to Courthouse Urban Design Study (RCUDS). Although he is happy to see housing on the site, the housing will mostly be expensive luxury apartments. He would like to have more on-site affordable units, and the term of affordable units to be extending longer than 30 years. He also believes the proposed design is under parked.

Commission Discussion

Kellen MacBeth said he shared the public speakers concern about the 30-year term of affordability and would like to see that term extended. Alex McMillen stated that 30 years is the standard term for site plans contributions, but when they County uses Affordable Housing Investment Funds (AHIF) to create or preserve affordable housing, they strive for 75 years or longer of affordability. Eric Berkey also stated that the 30-year term is written into the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) and that changing the ACZO is quite a big undertaking. Kellen MacBeth stated it was worth the ask to see if developers are willing to commit units for more than 30 years in future site plans.

Holly Bray stated she was happy to see there was a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) deal occurring and also asked what the parking ratio at the site was. Nick Cumings stated the parking ratio was 0.32 spaces per unit. The low ratio is due to the proximity to the Courthouse metro station. Nick Cumings also said the site as at least one bike parking spot per unit.

Ben Arthur asked about the switch from the site being approved in 2015 as an office building to currently being proposed as a residential building. Nick Cumings stated that since the last site plan was approved there is a new site owner. He also said that housing is badly needed in Arlington and that was an important factor in them pursuing housing at the site.

Sara Rubalcava asked for the approximate rents of the market rate apartments. John Beinert said they will have many micro units that will range around \$2,000 per month and many family sized units in the building that will range around \$3,800 per month, depending on the unit type and size.

Paul Browne asked if the affordable units include micro units. Nick Cumings replied that the County only accepts true one- and two-bedroom units, so no micro units will be included. Referring to the public speaker's comments, Paul Browne also asked how the proposed design does and doesn't apply to the RCUDS. Nick Cumings replied that the RCUDS does propose a certain number of stories, but that there is flexibility for height within that study. He also stated that even though the current proposal is 16 stories, increased from the 12 stories approved in 2015, that the new proposal is only 18 feet higher, due to the difference in residential and office story height. He also mentioned that providing community benefits, such as affordable housing, allows the site to gain additional height.

Anika Montgomery asked what materials are being used to build the residential units. John Beinert stated the building will be all concrete, due to site constraints and other factors.

The Commission advises the County Board to approve the 2025 Clarendon Boulevard Site Plan Amendment, as presented by County staff. The Commission vote on the motion was 10-0-1. Members in favor were Commissioners Arthur, Berkey, Bray, Browne, Edwards, Hemminger, Montgomery, Norris, Rubalcava, and Serfis, with Commissioner MacBeth abstaining.

County Manager's Housing Budget

Public Comment

No public comment.

Commission Discussion

Kellen MacBeth said he was disappointed with the overall budget allocations for housing. However, he was happy to see an additional Full Time Employee (FTE) for committed affordable unit (CAF) compliance and an additional FTE for the Development team added to the budget, but still noted that more FTEs should be added. He also mentioned he was dissatisfied with the amount of funding that came out of the CAF Strategies document. He asked what will happen to low-income residents when federal rental assistance funding expires later this year. Marie Randall stated there is still a lot of work to do and staff is exploring options to best meet the needs of low-income residents in the County.

Paul Browne asked what percent of income Housing Grants Recipients pay each month on rent. Marie Randall answered that many Housing Grants Recipients do have to pay more than 30% of their income to meet rent. This is a discrepancy from the Housing Choice Voucher program and something

staff is looking at. Paul Browne also asked what implication the Barcroft Apartments acquisition had on the housing budget for this year. Marie Randall answered that staff is still analyzing possible uses for this year's AHIF allocation. It could be used to pay down the Line of Credit (LOC) at Barcroft Apartments or could be used on future projects or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) rounds. Sarah Pizzo clarified that there will be no future County funding asks by Jair Lynch Real Estate Partners for the Barcroft Apartments.

Ben Arthur asked how many current FTEs are in the Housing Division. Marie Randall answered that there are currently 22 FTEs, and the two additional FTEs will bring the total to 24.

Eric Berkey made a motion to write a letter from the Commission to the County Board supporting the current AHIF funding level, asking for additional AHIF funding, supporting the recommendation for two additional FTEs in the Housing Division, and asking for more staff resources if possible. The Commission vote on the motion was 11-0. Members in favor were Commissioners Arthur, Berkey, Bray, Browne, Edwards, Hemminger, MacBeth, Montgomery, Norris, Rubalcava, and Serfis.

Columbia Gardens Update

Public Comment

No public comment.

Commission Discussion

Kellen MacBeth said the County should explore linking up the County permitting office with the Housing Division, to notify of potential tenant displacement as soon as the County knows about potential redevelopment. Kellen MacBeth also said the County should explore if the incentives to keep affordable housing on Columbia Pike are enough to deter developers from redeveloping by-right townhomes in the future.

Ben Arthur asked where Columbia Gardens Apartments is located. Holly Bray answered that is down the street from Arlington Mill.

Affordable Housing Master Plan Draft Implementation Framework

Public Comment

No public comment.

Commission Discussion

Kellen MacBeth asked how often fair housing testing occurs and when it will occur next. Russell Danao-Schroeder answered that it happens every two years. Kellen MacBeth said that Arlington only tests for two of the eleven protected classes and asked that the County Board recognize and test for all eleven protected classes.

Kellen MacBeth stated he was surprised to see community land trust was not part of the affordable homeownership recommendation and asked why that wasn't included. Russel Danao-Schroeder said there was discussion about community land trust and said that could be something staff looks more into with the upcoming homeownership study.

Kellen MacBeth asked when the Racial Equity Process Guide would be rolled out. Russell Danao-Schroeder answered that it will likely be unveiled sometime this year. Kellen MacBeth said that is something that is long overdue in Arlington. Russell Danao-Schroeder also mentioned that the

County doesn't currently have reliable data on CAF tenants and getting more of that data will be important to the County's equity work.

Michael Hemminger stated that one of his main takeaways from the document is the elderly and child populations have increased greatly. It is important to allow the elderly to age in place and to continue to build family sized units to meet these changing demographics. He also noted there are many minority groups that are disproportionately rent burdened in the County. He said that due to the rising housing costs soon only the very wealthy will be able to live in the County. He also called out the lack of CAFs that have been provided through the Affordable Housing Ordinance, and how many developers decide to make AHIF contributions instead of providing units.

Ben Arthur said that the colocation of affordable housing is important, and that the County has missed some opportunities to fulfill that. Ben Arthur also asked about the feasibility of changing the Affordable Housing Ordinance to reassess how CAFs and AHIF contributions are calculated. He said it would be likely that if the County's AHIF contribution rates were doubled developers would still choose to make an AHIF contribution instead of delivering on-site units.

Eric Berkey asked staff to explain the study associated with changing the definition of family and why the Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP) Implementation Framework (IF) suggested a 3-to-5-year time frame for accomplishing that recommendation. Russell Danao-Schroeder answered that this study recommendation is in coordination with the Planning Division. It is not a study that will likely happen next year but is on Planning's radar and once there is staffing to support it, they will work towards accomplishing that study.

Clarendon Sector Plan Update

Public Comment

John "Jack" Spilsbury spoke as the Chair of the Development Committee for the Ashton Heights Civic Association. He stated that he does want more affordable housing in the Clarendon area. However, he said the 2006 Clarendon Sector Plan identified the 10th St. County-owned site as an opportunity for open green space. He implied that the new increased density added to the sector plan could help accomplish affordable housing goals within the area. He pointed to a few areas that could support affordable housing or redevelopment; but in conclusion strongly urged that this site be used as green open space as was stated in the 2006 Clarendon Sector Plan.

Commission Discussion

Alice Hogan, the Housing Commission Liaison to the Clarendon Sector Plan Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC), asked why two of the five initial scenarios offered for the 10th St. County-owned site were eliminated. Brett Wallace said one of the scenarios was eliminated because it did not offer any public open space. He stated the second scenario was eliminated because it didn't meet the public space goals, as well as the site geography made it difficult to have a new stand-alone fire station.

Kellen MacBeth stated the presentation made a good argument for why housing would be a good use on this site. He also asked if staff has analyzed creative solutions for achieving both open space and housing at the site. Brett Wallace responded by mentioning the language in the plan allows staff to be creative in pursuing rooftop or indoor public community facilities.

Ben Arthur said he feels very strong that there must be affordable housing on the County-owned site. He said he hoped the Commission could come together and vote unanimously to counteract the

unanimous vote by the Planning Commission to not include housing at this site. Ben Arthur also noted that as a part of the plan a large portion of Fairfax Drive would become open space, and that could fulfill the Clarendon residents desire for open space. Lastly, he stated that any building constructed at this site should maximize height and density.

Kellen MacBeth made a motion to support the recommended Clarendon Sector Plan update as is, but that the Housing Commission recommends that affordable housing be built on the 10th St. County-owned site. Ben Arthur asked to make an amendment to the motion that the Housing Commission support the recommended Clarendon Sector Plan update as is, contingent on affordable housing being built on the 10th St. County-owned site. Kellen MacBeth accepted the amendment to the motion. The Commission vote on the motion was 7-1. Members in favor were Commissioners Arthur, Berkey, Bray, Browne, MacBeth, Montgomery, and Norris, with Commissioner Serfis voting against the motion. Commissioner Serfis stated she voted against the motion because the site is a difficult fit.