

Arlington County Tenant-Landlord Commission

Virtual Meeting 7 p.m.

Meeting Notes – June 9, 2021

Commissioners present: David Timm (Chair), Kirit Mookerjee, Emily Camardo, Kristen Clegg, Nicole Merlene, Bismah Ahmed.

Commissioners absent: Chris Whimbush, Matthew Whitefield Esq.

Staff Present: Rolda Nedd, Hector Mercado, Jennifer Daniel

A recording of the meeting is available on the Commission's [webpage](#).

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Approval of meeting notes – Meeting minutes for the months of April and May were unanimously approved

Public Comment – June O'Connell raised attention to proposals by Dittmar to convert apartment units for use as hotel rooms in several apartment complexes. This will impact housing affordability leading to higher rents. Ms O'Connell encouraged the TLC to be part of the discussion. The Board has requested a policy review. Chair Timm invited comment from Commissioners.

Merion Pike West Relocation Plan – Brian Veith provided a brief overview of the project. All tenants will be relocated, project treated as a permanent relocation since the property will be fully demolished. Seeking to provide relocation nearby and temporary relocation on site when possible. 26 units in phase one this affects 61 residents in 26 units. Questions were about the number of tenant meetings and other outreach methods to inform tenants. The project is expected to take place over 2-3 years. Hector Mercado – Relocation Specialist advised that comments will be taken until Thursday June 17.

Affordable Housing Master Plan Review – Joel Franklin and Russel Danao-Schroeder, Principal Planners, Housing Division. The review is required by the Code of VA and marks the 5-year anniversary of the plan. It consists of - updated needs analysis, a five-year progress report, housing Commission subcommittee review, development of the implementation framework, community review process and presentation to the County Board. The goals of Supply, access and sustainability were discussed in detail. Several questions were posed by Commissioners including, how best to increase the number of CAF units annually? It was pointed out that in Arlington the greatest number of units are needed to serve renters at the 30% AMI level, is there a focused effort to provide more housing at this level? Can AHIF funding be better aligned to address this need and use funds proposed by Amazon? Objective 2.2 included mediation services – the question of mediation services and whether these would be recommended for the future, it was pointed out that this was discontinued and determined to be more appropriately provided as a third-party service. Objective # 3.1 focused on code compliant and safe housing. Commissioner Merlene provided information about the code enforcement process and highlighted what appeared to be a lengthy process to address code violations. She questioned how best the TLC could advocate for more resources to enhance code enforcement to make the process more efficient and effective. Staff advised that the TLC could provide comments on priorities which could be included in the implementation framework at the relevant time in the review process. Commissioner Mookerjee

commented on other initiatives such as Land trusts, Tenant's Rights to Purchase which other jurisdictions may have and may be worth investigating by Arlington.

FY2022 Legislative Priorities – Chair Timm requested Commissioners to provide a list of possible legislative areas of interest. His conversations with Commissioners Whitefield and Merlene provided some areas for discussion. Commissioner Merlene identified a few areas of concern related to property maintenance, habitability and other basic standards and code enforcement which may be strengthened through specific code legislation. Commissioner Clegg pointed out that many of these specific items are addressed in the VRLTA and perhaps a deeper look at the Act and education for tenants might be more effective.

Serrano Updates - Chair Timm briefly reviewed the Housing Commission meeting held on June 3 where there was discussion of AHC's request for a subordination loan to maintain the Serrano and also the proposal of a jointly staffed TLC and Housing Commission subcommittee to address conditions in aging buildings. There is a letter by VOICE (that will be shared with the Commission), that requests inclusion of specific commitments from AHC to provide specific timeframes for improvement of conditions at the Serrano as a condition for approval of the subordination request. A vote was taken in support of the joint subcommittee. Six Commissioners voted in favor of the formation of the joint subcommittee.

Subcommittee Updates

- Housing Discrimination subcommittee – Commissioner Camardo reported on presentations from DHS on the Arlington Landlord Fund and housing for persons with criminal history.
- Outreach and Publicity subcommittee – Commissioner Mookerjee reported on progress of the subcommittee in getting the TLC meeting announced on the Housing Arlington web page; development of a flyer to promote the TLC meetings; forming partnerships with similar advocacy groups.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.