

Meeting Notes Tenant Landlord Commission Meeting 9/14/22

September 14, 2022 7:00 p.m. Hybrid Meeting Rm 715 Bozman Building
Commissioners Present: David Timm (Chair), Kirit Mookerjee,,
Emily Camardo, Julio Basurto, Chris Wimbush, Ryan Whitaker, Aaron
Almanza Matt Royer
Absent: Kristin Clegg, Bismah Ahmed
Staff Attending: Rolda Nedd, Hector Mercado, Melissa Danowski

The electronic meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Timm. Chair’s remarks included welcome remarks to all at the first in-person meeting. He announced that Commissioner Wimbush has accepted the Vice Chair position. Roll call was taken.

Item#1: Electronics Meeting Policy and Hybrid Meeting Policy was announced and voted on. Motion moved by Commissioner Whitaker and seconded by Commissioner Wimbush. Policy was accepted by unanimous vote.

Item #2: Public Comment: No comment

Item # 3: July Meeting minutes approval – There were no changes to the July minutes; motion to approve was given by Commissioner Camardo, seconded by Commissioner Whitaker.

Item #4 Marbella Relocation Plan:

Halle Norris provided a brief overview of the Marbella Phase II Relocation Plan and invited comments/questions.

There were two questions from Commissioners Mookerjee and Wimbush, about the availability of Tenant Assistance Funds for eligible tenants and coordination with the school district for relocation of students if necessary.

Motion was taken to approve the relocation plan. (Vote 7-1) Commissioner Royer made the motion and was seconded by Commissioner Camardo. Commissioner Whitaker abstained. Vote 7-1.

Item #5 Barcroft update

Melissa introduced David Hilde and Mark Hannan of Jair Lynch Development Company. They provided a presentation (copy available online) of the results of the resident survey begun at the beginning of 2022. The survey highlighted the income levels of current residents, the majority of whom were at 60% AMI and below. 22% of renters were in the 0-30% AMI level. Other characteristics were summarized. The presenters highlighted their process which includes one on-one interviews with residents to address their concerns about rent increases and assess their financial situation. Pointed to the fact that rents are currently at the 2021 rent level, no increase given in 2022, but a 3% increase likely, going forward. Communication with residents is taking place via a specific website BeBarcroft.com, on-site signage used to inform about community meetings, utilizing different engagement events to meet the community. Next steps include the development of a Master Financing Development Plan to assess the maximum development potential of the property in collaboration with County staff.

Ten residents attended. The five tenants that spoke were long standing tenants (legacy tenants), many lived there more than 15 years.

- Several residents indicated fixed incomes due to health and job loss and retirement and the impact that a rent increase would have on their ability to continue to live at Barcroft. Requested a rent freeze crease or a bi-annual rent increase.
- Comment on the condition of the property, including rodents, leaking windows, not enough dumpsters for trash, condition of the hallways and general lack of regular property maintenance.
- Residents requested a “rent freeze” for at least 15 months to allow them to plan for this; request consideration for the impact of inflation and stagnant wages.
- One resident commented on the negotiation process with individual tenants and commented that there may be limited capacity for property/owner staff to conduct these interviews.

A representative from Arlingtonians for a Sustainable Future expressed concern for the potential displacement as a result of rent increases and that the project appears to focus more on redevelopment than on preservation. Ms Bodine expressed general concern for increased density and impact throughout the County.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Whitaker wanted clarification on what is being negotiated with individual tenants and whether there was a standard set of specific criteria, and the timeframe being used to interview all residents? Mark responded that individual interviews were taking place to assess individual financial situations. Renewal process is taking place. Renewal letters include process, new rents, timeframe, and documents required for income verification.

Questions and comments from Commissioners: Is there a full assessment of the state of repairs needed and what has been done? Response: Yes, individual unit assessments undertaken, physical site conditions showing- missing sidewalks, trees, dumpsters, pest control. Significant repairs needed.

-What is the County’s role and how will it be involved in shaping the process and tracking outcome of one-on-one negotiations? Concern that there is active County involvement to track outcomes, and intervene in a timely manner. Staff responded that the County is actively involved.

-Property improvement should be prioritized over community activities and amenities.

-Importance of proactive communication with residents to abate fears about rent increase. Need to ensure adequate communication

-Two Commissioners- Basurto, Royer expressed support for the request for a “rent freeze”.

-Commissioner Elder Basurto encouraged tenants to continue organizing.

Chair Timm summarized the Commission’s position:

- Appreciative of Jair Lynch’s interest in hearing tenants’ concerns. Primary issue is the uncertainty that tenants face given the individual negotiations taking place. Request that Jair Lynch representatives present the negotiation criteria being used; tenants need to understand the parameters of individual negotiation.
- Jair Lynch to provide detailed information on steps taken and future plans to improve property conditions, what real changes are taking place to improve conditions and a timeframe; tenants were invited to subsequent meetings.
- The request for a “rent freeze” is outside the purview of the TLC but may consider a letter to the County Board addressing rent increases, pending further information after the October meeting.

Item # 6 Joint Subcommittee of the Status of Aging Properties (JSSAP)

Janeth Valenzuela – request that the report be accepted. Want to acknowledge that the work began at the Serrano, successful tenant action occurred to bring about significant change at the Serrano. Concern that changes to the report by AHC will obscure the severity of the problems. Recommendations will ensure that this does not happen again. Wants to submit an accompanying document from tenants and advocates.

Chair Timm invited Eric Berkely, Chair of the Housing Commission to summarize the amendment that Janeth introduced. Erick, acknowledge that the hard work of residents' organizing should be added to the report. Additional statements to be submitted from advocates and AHC, but not to be considered endorsements by the Housing Commission. 1. Concerns about the breadth of the report and different perspectives; not broad enough in including scope of other housing partners. 2. Costs of associated recommendations.

There was significant discussion regarding the process for approving the report - questions on the scope of the recommendations whether applicable only to CAFs or broader applicability to all aging properties, possible addendums including consideration for the cost implications of recommendations. Commission Whitaker had concerns that recommendations would be extrapolated to all properties i.e. universal recommendations that may not be broadly applicable and decided to vote against report on this basis. Commissioner Almanza had concerns about costs and impact on CAF providers and voted against.

Vote: - Unanimous approval to support the report as is. Wants the County Board to consider the cost of recommendations. Commissioner Wimbush proposed the motion, Commissioner Royer seconded. The vote was 6-2. Six members voted in favor and Commissioners, Whitaker and Almanza voted against.

Chair Timm reminded members that there is a tenant vacancy on the Commission and would appreciate help to fill the vacancy.

Adjourned: Meeting ended at 9:32 p.m.