

**Citizens Advisory Commission on Housing
Hybrid Meeting Notes**

The Housing Commission convened its meeting at **7:10pm** on **April 13, 2023**.

PRESENT (IN-PERSON) Chair Kellen MacBeth
 Commissioner Anika Montgomery
 Commissioner Karen Serfis
 Commissioner Nikki Blake
 Commissioner Margaret McGilvray
 Commissioner Michael Hemminger
 Commissioner Sara Rubalcava

PRESENT (VIRTUALLY) Commissioner Paul Browne
 Commissioner Haley Norris
 Commissioner Laura Saul Edwards
 Disability Advisory Commission Liaison Doris Ray

ABSENT Commissioner Eric Berkey
 Commissioner Eric Lee

STAFF Alex McMillen, Melissa Danowski, Joel Franklin, Marc McCauley,
 Jennifer Daniels, Anne Venezia, Sarah Pizzo

[View Part 1 of the Meeting Recording Here](#)

[View Part 2 of the Meeting Recording Here](#)

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

New Business Not on the Agenda

Kellen MacBeth shared with the Commission that he met with staff and the Planning Commission chair to discuss the lack of tenant participation in the Site Plan Review Process (SPRC). A main takeaway from that discussion was there is a lack of staff capacity to assist with that outreach. Based on that conversation it was proposed that the Housing Commission amend their budget letter to include the support for not cutting the associate planner position in this year's budget. The Commission voted unanimously to amend their budget letter to include support for keeping that staff position.

Approval of Notes – Action

Karen Serfis made a motion to approve the notes, Margaret McGilvray seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- [View the March 9th, 2023, Housing Commission notes here](#)

Americana Hotel – Action

Staff presented the action item before handing it over to the Applicant team to present as well.

- [View the handout here](#)

Anika Montgomery asked the Applicant how they got a deal to park off-site at the Bartlett. The Applicant answered that they own both properties.

Sara Rubalcava asked what percentage of Crystal House (CH) is currently affordable. Staff clarified that the Crystal Houses referenced in the presentation referred to the infill opportunity, as opposed to the already operational Crystal Houses 1 and 2. Staff said the CH infill development would contain 655 affordable rental units, 189 market rate rental units and an undetermined number of market rate homeownership units.

Karen Serifs asked if both the Americana Hotel site as well as Crystal Houses infill development will be new construction. Staff answered that both would be new construction.

Anika Montgomery asked for the definition of a junior one bedroom. The Applicant answered that it typically means that the bedroom doesn't have a window, so it is somewhere between a standard one bedroom and a studio unit. Anika Montgomery also asked what the rents would be at the site. The Applicant answered they are not sure since the building won't be delivered for several years.

Paul Browne asked if the decision to take cash instead of units results in fewer units overall. Staff answered that taking the cash in lieu ensures the County can meet the commitments it has already made. There are several policy considerations that come into play, namely the tight budgets and ability to leverage more units for longer affordability periods. Historically the County has received on-site units, however, with current conditions staff is recommending taking cash in lieu. This decision is furthered due to the units at Crystal Houses being delivered only a few blocks from the Americana Hotel site.

Kellen MacBeth said that this decision is a result of the County cutting AHIF funding. He said it is shortchanging housing a bit and hopes the County Board takes the Commission's budget letter to heart.

Kellen MacBeth asked staff to outline the priorities of using AHIF. Staff answered the first priority is commitments that have already been made, for example meeting the debt service on projects and continuing to make those payments. Second is the commitments that have been made but not yet funded, such as Crystal Houses. And third is the pipeline of projects to create and preserve affordable housing.

Kellen MacBeth asked how much funding is currently in AHIF. Staff answered that is not a number they have readily available as it is constantly changing and the Asset Manager was not present for the meeting.

Michael Hemminger asked where the closest metro station was to the site and if that influenced how much parking would be provided. The Applicant answered there are two metro stations very close, and it did impact how much parking they would be providing. Michael Hemminger asked if there were sloping issues with the site. The Applicant answered there is grade change on the site but that it is not an issue.

Michael Hemminger asked when the last time JBG Smith provided on-site affordable units. The Applicant answered it may be the Bartlett, but the last few projects provided off-site units at River House. Michael Hemminger asked staff to provide the history of the Developers' contributions in new site plan projects.

Kellen MacBeth asked if the Americana Hotel sign would be preserved. The Applicant answered they tried to incorporate it into the new design but that it proved to difficult for a number of reasons.

Doris Ray asked how many Type-A accessible units would be in the building. The Applicant answered that there would be 13 Type-A units which is about 2% of total units. Doris Ray said she was saddened at the lack of Type-A accessible units in the building.

Kellen MacBeth asked at what point the Developer must decide how to meet the base Affordable Housing Ordinance. The Applicant answered they don't have to make that decision until near the Certificate of Occupancy with how the conditions are written.

Margaret McGilvray made a motion to approve the project with the staff recommendation, Karen Serfis seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-1 with Commissioners Blake, Browne, Edwards, Hemminger, MacBeth, McGilvray, Montgomery, Norris, Rubalcava and Serfis in favor. Commissioner Browne voted against the motion citing the lack of on-site affordable units in the project.

Regional Fair Housing Plan – Action

Staff and the consultant gave a presentation on the Regional Fair Housing Plan and the associated recommendations for the region and for Arlington County.

- [View the Regional Fair Housing Plan here](#)

Sara Rubalcava asked if this information was being disseminated to Arlington Public Schools (APS) students. Staff answered that outreach for the effort was extensive but has ended. Staff also noted that as the plan is implemented it will have to undergo planning efforts and that outreach could be done there.

Michael Hemminger asked how many total public comments were received. The Consultant answered she may have to get back to the Commission with that number. It was noted that proportionally more comments came from localities such as Arlington and Alexandria.

Michael Hemminger asked if more focus could be placed on very-low-income units. He also asked how Arlington compares to the other localities that were part of the plan. The Consultant answered Arlington did very well and has many more locality specific goals than the other localities that participated. It was also noted that Arlington is a great leader in fair housing compared to localities around the nation.

Margaret McGilvray stated she was enormously gratified to see the collaborative effort across jurisdictions. She said hopefully this will help retain residents looking for homeownership opportunities.

Michael Hemminger asked to make some goals more specific with time periods. He also asked where the County is with incorporating source of income discrimination. Staff said there is no updated on that at this time. Michael Hemminger also stated more localities should try to partner with Houses of Worship to provide affordable housing.

Kellen MacBeth asked staff to continue collaboration with APS on fair housing issues. He also stated fear of reprisal is a fear, especially among those who are limited English proficient, when it comes to fair housing and the County should include a goal on that. He asked the County include fair housing testing for more of the eleven protected classes in Virginia. He said there were specific challenges among the LGBTQ+ community and that a recommendation should be included to address that challenge.

Doris Ray thanked staff and the Consultant for their work on the plan. She also asked for fair housing testing on more of the protect classes, but especially disability status.

Nikki Blake asked what HUD's role is in the process. Staff confirmed the plan needs to be submitted to HUD. The Consultant also said that HUD has been involved in this process throughout and want to use it as a model going forward for other regional governments.

Kellen MacBeth restated the recommendations discussed by the Commission. They are:

1. Include fair housing education and outreach to APS students
2. Add more specificity around goals such as deeper affordability and affordable housing creation
3. Add a strategy around getting more Type-A accessible units
4. Working with Houses of Worship to create affordable housing
5. Work with APS on disparity to access to high performing schools
6. Add additional fair housing testing areas for more protected classes
7. Add a recommendation to work with tenants on fear of reprisal
8. Add a strategy to address LGBTQ+ housing challenges
9. Add a recommendation to include testing around source of income discrimination

Sara Rubalcava made a motion to approve the above recommendations and send a letter to the County Board, the motion was seconded by Margaret McGilvray. The motion passed unanimously.

Park Shirlington – Action

Staff and the Developer presented the item for an additional Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) allocation.

- [View the draft staff report here](#)

The Commission started with a motion to approve the AHIF allocation as a commissioner had to leave but was necessary for quorum purposes. The motion to approve the AHIF allocation passed unanimously.

Margaret McGilvray asked how the additional AHIF request impacts the overall fund outlook and constraints. Staff answered that there is sufficient unallocated AHIF funds to support the request. It was also noted that the request submitted was a maximum and can end up coming in under the request amount based on several factors.

Kellen MacBeth asked if there would be resident services offered at the property. The Developer answered that there will not be the standard resident services coordinator at the property. However, they will have a community room and look to partner with non-profit providers to offer some of those services for residents.

Haley Norris asked if the Developer already has a bond allocation and closing date. The Developer answered they have their bond allocation and are working with HUD to confirm the closing date.

Sara Rubalcava asked if there have been any health and safety issues at the property like what has been seen at the Serrano Apartments. The Developer said he is not familiar with the issues at the Serrano but that there are no security issues or deferred maintenance issues. It is an older property that needs renovations, and they are looking forward to getting those started.

Michael Hemminger asked about the use of carpet in the renovations. The Developer confirmed the units are currently carpeted. The renovated units will have carpets in the bedroom and vinyl flooring in the living areas. The Developer stated residents prefer carpet in the bedrooms based on a survey they conducted.

Michael Hemminger asked why the sound barrier on the highway next to the property ended right before this low-income housing property. The Developer said they appealed this to the Virginia Department of Transportation, but the ship had sailed unfortunately.

Michael Hemminger asked if in unit internet would be provided for free. The Developer confirmed that low-income residents would receive free in unit internet.

Michael Hemminger asked why redevelopment with more density wasn't considered. The Developer answered that it was considered, but due to the elevation of the property it didn't allow for much more height on the site.

Anika Montgomery asked if any units at the property would be available to current or recently homeless individuals through non-profit partners. Staff answered there are 15 permanent supportive housing units at the property.

Sara Rubalcava asked if the Housing Commission would be able to see the renovated units after they are complete. The Developer said that would be possible to arrange after they are complete.

Doris Ray asked if the renovations would result in any accessible units. The Developer answered there will fifteen accessible units after the renovations. Doris Ray also asked if the property will be ADA compliant. The Developer answered it will be ADA compliant.

Sara Rubalcava asked if all the amenities will be ADA compliant. The Developer answered everything at the site will be ADA compliant as per federal law.

Barcroft Process Update – Information

Staff presented the item to give an update on progress to date and short term plans for the property.

- [View the presentation here](#)

Kellen MacBeth asked where staff is on the Master Financing and Development Plan (MFDP). Staff answered that review is happening in a parallel process to this initial plan. Staff noted that review should be complete by the end of the year.

Kellen MacBeth asked if there were any very-low-income residents in the units being prepared for the initial rehabilitation. Staff answered they are still working to collect those exact numbers.

Kellen MacBeth asked how the County was supporting resident groups to engage them throughout the process. Staff answered there are advocate groups working at the property now but that that desire is noted.

Development Updates – Information

Staff went over the meetings roster chart to ensure there was SPRC representation from the Housing Commission. Kellen MacBeth asked if staff could put together a SharePoint document to keep track of who signed up for SPRC meetings.

Subcommittee Reports – Information

There were no reports.

Meeting adjourned at **10:50pm**.