

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON HOUSING
KELLEN MACBETH, CHAIR

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December 12, 2023

Hon. Christian Dorsey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Barcroft Affordability and Financing Plan

Dear Mr. Dorsey:

At its December 7, 2023, virtual public meeting, the Housing Commission considered the Barcroft Apartments Affordability and Financing Plan.

The Commission is overwhelmingly in support of the project. The Commission voted 9-0 with one abstention to support the staff recommendation and approve the plan. The Commission thanks both Jair Lynch Real Estate Partners and county staff for bringing forward a proposal that provides sitewide affordability and achieves many Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP) goals, such as increasing the amount of family sized units, increasing the amount of units affordable to persons at very-low incomes, providing Permanent Supportive Housing, among others.

Commission discussion focused primarily on asking both the developer and county to include a written aspirational goal in the Master Financing and Development Plan (MFDP) of achieving 255 committed affordable units (CAFs) up to 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) at the site. The current proposal commits to a minimum of 134 units up to 30% AMI.

The Housing Commission made a motion to include the aspirational goal in the plan. The Commission voted 5-4 with one abstention to approve the motion. Commissioners in support of this inclusion were: Commissioner Blake, Commissioner Escovar, Commissioner Hemminger, Commissioner Wenger, and Commissioner Linick. The Commissioners in favor of the aspirational goal to house 255 households at or below 30% AMI on the Barcroft site view it as an important part of the county's commitment to preserving Arlington's economic diversity. Documenting this aspirational goal within the MFDP is an important guiding element of the land use planning for the Barcroft site and may become more achievable over time when/if the financial environment for the site improves.

Commissioners voting against the motion were Commissioners Browne, Commissioner McGilvray, Commissioner Norris, and Commissioner Serfis. The Commissioners who voted against the motion felt that the developer has already committed to significant affordability at the site, and did not want to create unrealistic expectations or burden for

the developer. Although the need to protect the financial viability of the project was a priority for all Commissioners, the Commissioners in favor of the documented aspirational goal believe the 255 goal can ultimately be accomplished over time using a combination of financing, income averaging, 9% tax credits, and land use tools. We recommend that the County Board ensures that the MFDP includes an explicit written aspirational commitment to produce, over the ten-year phasing period, 255 units hard-wired at or below 30% AMI for at least 30 years.

Thank you for your consideration and support of affordable housing in Arlington.

Sincerely,

Kellen MacBeth
Chair