

Arlington Tenant Landlord Commission

January 11, 2023 Meeting Notes

Meeting recording

Members present: David Timm (Chair) Chris Wimbush (Vice-Chair), Matt Royer, Kirit Mookerjee, Elder Julio Basurto, Kristin Clegg, Ryan Whitaker, Emily Camardo, Aaron Almanza.

Members absent: Bismah Ahmed

Agenda Items

Public Comment – Ana Ordonez , a tenant at the Serrano, addressed the Commission and provided information on recent maintenance problems at the Serrano. Problems include extended periods of water shut offs. Problems with the elevators in both buildings, one instance of a month long shut down causing difficulty for seniors, children, and tenants with disabilities. Heating shutoffs on very cold days without proper communication on the availability of heaters. She also commented on delayed responses from management. Ms Ordonez also described a situation regarding her safety in the building and surrounding area.

Chair Timm, invited Commissioners to comment on the testimony. He also indicated that a report on the same matter had been received the same evening from Marjorie Green a representative of V.O.I.C.E. Commissioners Whitaker and Almanza requested more information such as the dates and duration of the water and heating interruptions; in addition Commissioner Whitaker wanted to hear from additional tenants to determine the magnitude of the problem. Other comments included the need to hear from AHC to provide information on their response to the problem and in general their accountability since the property receives AHIF funding. Questioned what leverage the County has, to ensure that AHC provides these services as required by the Virginia Building Code.

Action proposed: Chair Timm proposed that members of the Commission allow him to draft a letter to the County Board after he receives necessary information such as the dates and duration of the outages; will request that the County Board take necessary action regarding oversight and enforcement of required actions to address these current and ongoing problems. The motion was moved by Commissioner Whitaker and seconded by Commissioner Clegg.

Meeting notes approval: A motion was taken to approve the minutes following necessary correction to the spelling of Commissioner Clegg’s name.

2022 Annual Affordable Housing Report, Joel Franklin Housing Planner

Joel Franklin, provided an overview of the Annual Affordable Housing Master Plan Report, he highlighted the Director’s message and focused on progress made during the past year on the

three major goals – supply , access and sustainability . The report is available at www.Housing.arlingtonva.us

Chair Timm asked whether the report addressed CAF strategies and whether these strategies could provide insight on how to address problems at the Serrano. Joel responded that the CAF strategies are broad, but that many of them are in place and are ongoing especially being implemented at Barcroft.

He suggested that Marie Randall and her team can better address the CAF strategies and implementation.

2023 TLC Work Plan

Chair, Timm invited Commissioners to reach out to him to set a time to discuss what they see as areas of interest for the Commission to address in the new year. He suggested that members be mindful that we should have ideas and a draft in time for the February meeting.

Evictions

Nana O. Nti, Housing Attorney, Legal Services of Northern Virginia was invited to provide an update on services at LSNV and specifically highlighted the recent Eviction Reports which he has distributed to County staff and other community stakeholders. Commissioners were informed that they could be requested to be included on the email list to receive these reports. Eviction filings had increased significantly in the month of December in Arlington. The rest of the LSNV team is also looking at general trends in Unlawful Detainers, including the communities in which more filings were occurring, the periods in which there were increases and decreases and also which law firms were more prevalent. Columbia Grove had the largest number of filings. Nana was thanked and invited to attend future TLC meetings.

FY2024 Proposed County Budget Outlook

Commissioner Wimbush, introduced the topic with reference to communication that the Commission had received. He highlighted budgeted amounts proposed for Housing related programs.. He proposed that the TLC support the preservation of existing funding for eviction prevention and to support level funding for housing related programs such as such as Permanent Supportive Housing, Housing Grants and AHIF and Federal Grant Funding. Chair Timm, informed the meeting that the Commission Chairs will be attending a meeting on January 17 to hear from the County Manager on proposed Budget recommendations. He will be attending and will report at the TLC February meeting. Commissioner Clegg commented that based on trends, Evictions will continue to increase since the Rent Relief program has ended and tenants must adjust to this funding not being available. She advised that it is necessary to educate renters on how to avoid eviction and manage their income to make rent paying a priority to maintain housing. Commissioner Royer agreed with maintaining AHIF funding for affordable housing and ensuring that there is adequate funding to address building maintenance.

Subcommittee Updates

Commissioner Camardo announced that the Alternative Dispute Resolution subcommittee will have its first meeting on January 23.

Commissioner Whitaker indicated that a time and date for the Outreach and Publicity meeting will be determined at the end of the meeting.

Member announcements: Commissioner Mookerjee stated that he had attended a community meeting on the Missing Middle, and commented that adoption of the plan could lead to displacement of residents and that the TLC Commission could be impacted. Commissioner Whitaker advised that the Commission remain focused on actionable items, address work plan topics that are within its purview and control.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was taken; moved by Commissioner Whitaker and seconded by Commissioner Royer . The meeting ended at 8:17 p.m.