

DRAFT

Affordable Housing Study Working Group

December 16, 2014

Meeting Notes

Members present: Dr. Leonard Hamlin (Chair), Dave Peterson, Steve Sockwell, Saul Reyes, Dave Leibson, Bob Bushkoff, Doris Topel-Gantos, Linda Kelleher, Matthew de Ferranti, John Grant, Steve Sockwell, Kathryn Scruggs, Ori Weisz, Candice Rose, Shelynda Brown

Staff: Russell Danao-Schroeder, Joel Franklin, Rolda Nedd, David Cristeal, Marsha Allgeier

Consultants: Lisa Sturtevant, Jeanette Chapman

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Dr. Hamlin called the meeting to order at 6:45, making allowance for the public comment period.
2. **Public comment:** There was no one signed up for public comment.
3. **Approval of October meeting notes:** October meeting notes were approved.
4. **Acceptance of focus meetings summary:** Members were asked to look at meeting summaries from focus meetings held throughout October and November and send comments or questions to Russell Schroeder.
 - Future meeting times for ongoing discussions – members were polled to determine what time of day is most convenient for meetings. The general consensus was that evening meetings are best for most members. The following upcoming meetings were noted:
 - Long Range Planning Commission- January 20
 - County Work session – tentatively Feb 3 which is a ‘check-in’ with Board members on progress of the plan. This will be done prior to a round of meetings with Commissions and the wider community.

5. Affordable Housing Plan

The discussion focused on 5 Cross-cutting issues in the Affordable Housing Plan

Flexibility of Housing Types in single-family neighborhoods

1.1.9. Allow for flexibility in housing types and zoning in single-family neighborhoods

Comments: There was general agreement with the notion of flexibility, but this may be better represented by using examples of types of housing, such as accessory dwelling units, shared housing etc. However, specific reference to zoning may raise questions as zoning needs to be specific.

Need to look beyond existing transit corridors and utilize other major arterials such as George Mason, Wilson and Clarendon to locate affordable housing. Plan should include fringe areas as well.

1.2.3. Allow for flexibility in housing types and residential uses in single-family neighborhoods

Members agreed with the language; more illustrations would help

2.1.2 Allow for flexibility in the definitions of family and household for occupancy purposes

Comments: This policy would allow for non-traditional families; would address need of the CSB community where there is often need for congregate living which is not permitted in single – family neighborhoods.

Language is somewhat vague; should use concrete language and be specific with examples.

Member commented that this should be an opportunity to acknowledge that there are existing forms of occupancy which already violate the definition of family and therefore this would be the time through a policy to correct and recognize these situations.

Geographic Distribution of Multi-Family Affordable Housing

1.1.2 Prevent the loss of committed affordable housing

Comments: Tracking “unit years”, the number of units times the number of years that each unit is committed to be affordable, is an important measure.

1.1.3. Make every reasonable effort to prevent the loss of market-rate affordable housing

Preservation reinforces the geography of existing distribution. There was no comment from the group on this.

1.1.6 Remove Barriers to the production of moderately-priced rental housing, including non-subsidized housing

Comment: Will this apply to new units and also to units below 60% AMI? To apply this to units under 60% AMI may be prohibitive.

1.1.8 Produce committed affordable rental units in the county consistent with the County’s adopted land use plans and policies along or near current transit corridors

Comments: This seems limited in that this Affordable Housing Plan is a long range plan (2040) so that to plan along existing corridors seem to ignore or not consider changes that are likely to occur in the transit pattern. Glebe Road, Wilson Blvd and other major roadways are already heavily developed. Suggested removal of “current”. Community should be aware that land use pattern is likely to change as growth occurs.

3.2.2 Ensure that committed affordable rental units have high levels of access to transportation options consistent with the Master Transportation Plan and transit-oriented development.

Comments: Land values along transit corridors are always much higher than elsewhere, which will significantly affect the cost of development in these areas. It was pointed out that the transportation plan identifies all modes of transit- multimodal. Arlington has benefitted from the coordination of land use (housing) with transportation patterns.

Consideration of Use of Public Land for Affordable Housing

3.5.1 and 3.5.2 Consider affordable housing needs and goals when planning for major capital investment in new or redeveloping existing major community facilities.

Comments: This policy has been addressed by the Long Range Planning Sub- committee of the Planning Commission: Memo states:

- o Recommendation - needs wider public involvement in the process
- o The context for the Public Land for Public Good (PL4PG) was not aimed at Affordable Housing
- o Co-location of recreational facilities with affordable housing could be a viable strategy

Commission Board member commented that the LRPC recognizes the acute need for affordable housing and that creative strategies are necessary. The study will be reassessed and be more specific and will more broadly address how to value and use public land for multiple purposes including Affordable Housing. PL4PG discussion should not affect progress of the Housing study. There was agreement that this policy should continue to include Affordable Housing.

Preferences for County Residents and/or Workers

2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 Should there be an explicit statement of preferences in CAF developments?

Comments:

Financing tools such as Tax credits indicates that there can be no preference. This type of financing yields the largest number of units and serves the most clients, a preference policy would affect it. If tax dollars is the source of financing i.e. AHIF funds then this may be a good reason to have a preference policy. Several members asked whether there is a legal position on this issue? Consultation with the County Attorney indicated that there is no clear guidance, but there is the possibility of a legal challenge if there is preference in housing policies. The situation in Arlington does not appear to warrant a “preference” policy as in 4 out of 5 cases residents receive housing in the County. There was discussion for and against preference. Members requested study findings on response from County employees with regard to wanting to live in the County. One member advanced the following points in support of preference – less than 25% of county employees live in the county, especially difficulty for school employees, firefighters and police to afford to live here, could be good selling point for taxes, could be an employee benefit.

One member asked how employers viewed this and requested that this be discussed at future meetings with employers; a strong economic argument could help determine the need for a preference policy. Would the county be more competitively attractive? The working group members who represented tenants wanted to be guided by the legal position, but felt that certain circumstances where clients are affected by such as relocation due to redevelopment would benefit from a preference policy.

Recommendation: This is an issue that requires monitoring, tracking to determine if the balance of renters served changes from predominantly serving Arlington residents and workers.

Housing Needs of Middle-Income Households

1.1.6, 1.2.1. Remove barriers to the production of moderately-priced rental housing, including non-subsidized housing

Comment: Policy should say “multi-family”, and 1.2.2 changed to read “moderately priced” ownership units. One member suggested that this include small townhome as well to accommodate county workers such as firefighters, police. This may have to be subsidized. The example of “patio homes” was cited. Perhaps developers can receive a subsidy to build this type of housing.

Should also look at flexibility in Land Use regulations to accommodate “micro units, zero-lot lines and other amendments to help cost of production of Affordable units.

3.1.4 Provide education and financial assistance to landlords and homeowners for the maintenance and moderate-income housing.

Comment: Financial tool. One member suggested that a portion of the proceeds from the Real Estate Tax Relief program be redirected to a fund to subsidize housing for county employees.

Member requested the results of survey data for school and county employee to determine the extent of need. Also information from focus group of employers.

b. Introduction to Implementation framework

Russell Schroeder briefly introduced the discussion on the Implementation framework which will focus on existing and potential tools for achieving the affordable housing policy goals. Two focus meetings are planned for Working Group members to review the Implementation Framework on January 7 and 14. The first part of the Implementation Framework will be sent to members on December 30.

One member commented on the existing goals and targets and how we will measure and track progress going forward. Will need a monitoring report and a way of tracking progress against established targets.

c. Russell Schroeder indicated that review and feedback on the goals, and objectives were still welcome and that there was movement toward finalizing these. Anyone who has comments is encouraged to send them to him, by the end of December.

6. Sub-committee report

Civic Engagement - members are encourage to continue to talk with their groups, let staff know if a presentation is needed. Present tools and goals to their groups, stimulate discussion on affordable housing in all venues. The Chair of the subcommittee commented on the need for information on the broad context for the study. Example – why do we need affordable housing, the link to a strong tax base, and to transportation.

Staff was requested to make a schedule of meetings available so that working group members could attend to support.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.