

COMMUNITY COMMENTS AND STAFF RESPONSES

Public Comment at Joint Housing Commission and Community Development Citizen
Advisory Committee Meeting on March 4, 2010

Alexa Mavroidis said she originally read the earlier draft Analysis of Impediments and noticed that there was no mention of the Olmstead Act. She has since received the updated draft and saw that Olmsted was included. Although issues are mentioned in the Analysis of Impediments, it is not in the Consolidated Plan. Page 163 and 164 talks about some of the critical housing needs but doesn't talk about solutions. There is a need for housing for people returning from institutions. She said she only sees a few references in the plan regarding institutions when there could be so much more. She suggested using MDS data to identify the needs of that population coming out of institutions.

Response: The Fair Housing Plan, which is drawn from the analysis of impediments, is an attachment to the Five Year Consolidated Plan as well as the analysis itself. MDS data was reviewed by the County, however, it is limited in what it provides. The Olmstead Act is mentioned in the Community Development Section of the Plan under MH/MR facilities and programs.

Lois Athey from BUGATA mentioned that the Consolidated Plan noted that Hispanic and African Americans in Arlington have a greater percentage of need in certain housing categories according to HUD data. She noted that the Hispanic population has decreased in Arlington and that she is concerned that we are losing too much of this population. While no indications of housing discrimination have been found in the tests, a lot of Latinos will not report that they have been discriminated against. Many of your projects are tax credit and many Latinos can't get through that process and it is often easier to let people that have a mainstream job into those units. It is very hard if you have an unstable job or seasonal work to get into these units. The County has a limited English requirement, but would like to see a report on the statistics. A report would make each department look to see if they are meeting this requirement. She also mentioned that she would like to see easier to use brochures and use of videos as way to get information out. How management companies do leases, such as month to month and not a year lease, need to be reviewed by Tenant-Landlord Commission. Need to get a report from code enforcement. She said that she is seeing a diluting of the neighborhoods. In the past four years she has seen a slippage of the social networks in the neighborhood which are vital for a successful Arlington. Need to weave together programs that benefit neighborhoods. A vast majority of homeless single males are Latino and undocumented and they can't access these programs. It is really

important to keep these people in housing because once they become homeless they continue to live on the streets.

Holly Bray asked if she has any ideas on how to help the undocumented homeless. Lois Athey said that they need help finding jobs, but the most important thing is to keep them in their home and eventually they will get a job and get back on their feet.

Response: The issue of one nonprofit housing developer which manages affordable housing communities to provide a month to month lease after the expiry of the initial one year lease, has now been included in the Five Year Consolidated Plan as a barrier to affordable housing. This is not the practice of most landlords in the County. Marketing and program outreach brochures, per the revised Analysis of Impediments and Fair Housing Plan, are to be made available in multiple languages per request. Persons not engaged in jobs with steady or typical payment methods (seasonal, hourly, etc), are required to provide affordable housing management lease offices with contacts for third party verifications where income may be averaged to determine eligibility. Currently there are no federal or local programs for non-disabled single adults to receive housing assistance. This issue is beyond staff ability to address or remediate as it would start at the federal level of housing policy making.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Peter Fallon asked why a use permit is an issue and is eight not enough. Staff explained that sponsors of programs such as safe havens (low-barrier housing for chronically homeless), and homes for persons released from prison with non-violent offenses perceive the process of obtaining a Use Permit as expensive and may raise confidentiality and privacy issues for clients. Consequently, the requirement to obtain a Use Permit could be a barrier to housing choice. Peter Fallon said that he sees that it can be a hurdle, but it is our process for regulating a use and it builds community consensus around that use and he doesn't necessarily see it as a barrier. Kathleen McSweeney noted that there is also a privacy concern and that would be a bigger issue with woman fleeing domestic violence. Michelle Winters asked what the requirements are once a barrier is identified, do you need to act. Jane Eboch said that we have identified some strategies in the Fair Housing Plan, but we do not have a strategy identified for the group home barrier. Alice Hogan suggested that staff take another look at the group home section because it is not very clear what the problem is.

Response: This is a Zoning issue that will need to be explored by appropriate staff.

Alice Hogan asked if the County will be updating the number of homeless with the new point in time survey numbers. She also noted that the hyphenation (text wrapping) is very distracting.

Response: The County conducted a new point in time survey in January of 2010 and that information is contained in the Five Year Consolidated Plan.

Pam Ray asked what the County is doing to help out neighborhoods. Staff said we have focused efforts in our Neighborhood Strategy Areas (NSA) on code enforcement, home improvement and employment focus. She also mentioned that each NSA has a youth program.

Response: County staff responded to and clarified this issue above.

Kit Britton noted that there is nothing in the Citizen Summary on the economic base of Arlington County. Its location creates cost issues that make it hard to do a lot for affordable housing, but that means we need to set aside more money to address it. For example we need to see how many people have jobs that would need workforce housing. We would love to see public employees have housing opportunities in Arlington.

Response: There is more detail on this topic in the Draft Consolidated Plan narratives. The County has temporarily suspended the Live Where You Work program that offers incentives to County employees to buy housing within the County. This suspension is envisioned to only last during the tight budget cycles and until the economy starts to improve.

Kathleen McSweeney noted that the new energy goal as proposed by the Housing Commission is not mentioned. Jane Eboch said that there is not anything that is too specific in the Citizen Summary, but the County does target energy efficiency for low-income households as noted on page seven. Michelle Winters said that energy efficiency is just one part of it and that we should be looking at healthy housing and the weatherization funds coming out.

Response: County staff responded to this issue above.

Michelle Winters noted that there are a large number of homeless families with children (118) and asked what the County is doing about it. Staff said this counts families with children in shelters and transitional housing. Staff will get more information on this for the Commission. Kathleen McSweeney noted that the housing locator is not in the Citizen Summary, which is one of the important ways we are getting homeless into housing. Kathleen McSweeney said that she feels it should be in the Citizen Summary since most people will read that and the position does not have long term funding. Pam Ray suggested including a mention of it in the HPRP section under the culinary arts program picture.

Doris Ray said she is concerned that the American Community Survey is underestimating the number of disabled persons. She thought that we could possibly get a more accurate

number from the Department of Rehabilitative Services. She believes it is higher because of all the federal jobs, amenities and public transit. The number of disabled persons sets the tone for the need of accessible units. In the plan there was not any discussion of issues around the Olmstead population and solutions around that issue. Look at a strategy of service providers going into the Institutional Structures section of the Plan to let people know of their Olmsted rights and follow it up with housing. Kathleen McSweeney asked if there was somebody like a housing locator for disabled persons, like the housing locator for homeless and Doris Ray said that there was not one. Appreciate the goal of adding an affordable housing goal, but do not know how to go about reaching the goal. There should be testing on disability discrimination. There is a lack of accessible accommodations in the homeless shelters. Would like to commend the staff and commission for all the process, but they should consider a dedicated public hearing and not just at the budget hearing where people may want to testify on something else. Most of the supportive housing goals are related to mental health issues and not physical disabilities.

Response: County staff will be looking at potential ways of assisting the Olmstead Act population find and retain stable housing. The Community Services Board, along with the Housing Assistance Bureau, are proactively and aggressively envisioning programmatic needs, parameters, and service delivery. Staff uses a host of data to determine what an extrapolated number to use for certain population segments and do not rely on just one source of data.

Public Comments Made at the County Board Budget Hearing Held March 23 and 24, 2010

MARCH 23 and 24, 2010

Support for proposed budget:

- **Shirlington Employment and Education Center (SEEC)** – Andres Tobar from this day laborer center thanked the Board for maintaining current support for the program. He noted that in the economic downturn, there has been an uptick of hunger, evictions, etc. Fortunately, this past year a coalition of churches has provided bag breakfast and lunches four days per week to the day laborers. Mr. Tobar further stated that his board and staff are very thankful to the Arlington County Police Department, in particular Capt. Michelle Nuneville, for working in tandem with SEEC and providing the best safety services possible to the citizenry of the County.
- **Economic Development Group (EDG)** – CFO Kevin Kelley thanked the Board for its continued CDBG support of the microenterprise program.

Opposition to proposed budget:

- **A-SPAN** – speakers included Sam Gatewood, Andrea Walker, Carol Felker, Kathleen Sibert, Missy Snelling, Pastor Richard Cobb, Johnny Watson, Jim Burke (Arlington Interfaith Council) Norman Hazur. A-SPAN requested that the 3% across the board cut to contracted human service partners be restored. It also requested that the Emergency Winter Shelter be extended to a year-round program. Volunteers and staff stated that relationships and trust had been formed between guests at the shelter and they follow up with volunteer advice to seek medical attention, mental health, etc. and without seeing their volunteer “friends” and staff on a daily basis, former guests will end up sick with possible communicable illnesses, not seek dental care, be malnourished, be victimized by crime, etc. Pastor Cobb stated that when the EWS closes, he sees a spike in theft at his church and loitering in the church parking lot. A coalition of Methodist churches in Arlington currently open the church in the morning on Fridays, provide breakfast and lunch, and a place to stay for part of the day until they return to the shelter. With it closed between April 1 and October 30, the guests of the shelter have no where to go, the ones with mental illness will be prone to committing crime and other nefarious activities.
- **Project Family** – three speakers expressed opposition to proposed cuts in Project Family. They said there is no other service comparable and children will suffer. Approximately 15-20 supporters came with the speakers.
- **BRAVO** – Susan Korfanty spoke on behalf of BRAVO stating that BRAVO cannot sustain the 41% proposed cut to its budget for FY 11. Without BRAVO, 6,000 tenants are at risk in Arlington of losing affordable housing. They have worked with 300 at-risk tenants in several complexes during the current fiscal year. They are afraid that what happened to 3,000 tenants in Arna Valley years ago during its gentrification will occur again. There were approximately 12 supporters of BRAVO at the hearing. Kirit Mokarjee also spoke on behalf of BRAVO.
- **Doorways** – Erik Gutshall (Lyons Park Civic Association President), Nicholas Evans (Doorways Board of Directors Chair), Millicent Baltimore (former resident) and Tracy Walker (former resident) all spoke on behalf of Doorways. Currently, 17% of its operating budget is County support. To have a sustainable model, 40% is required. They have used all their one time grants and donations and only have a four month reserve left. This is not acceptable as best practices indicate six month reserves are minimum. Doorways is well-received and supported in Lyon Park by the neighborhood and former residents gave compelling personal testimony of what they experienced and how they have succeeded since graduating from the program. The facility provides over 11,000 nights of shelter per year to families who would be homeless and are in domestic violence situations.
- **Friends of Guesthouse** – Kari Galloway, Executive Director, spoke of the 1,100 nights of shelter the center provides to ex-offender women and how this is the only center of this type in the region. Approximately 30% of the residents are Arlingtonians, yet Arlington only contributes 12% toward the operational budget. Ms. Galloway also

spoke in opposition of the 3% across the board cut to human services contracted entities.

- **Arlington Nonprofit Network** – Patricia Donnelly, of this group which represents most nonprofits doing business in Arlington, thanked the Board for its continued support of Safety Net programs. She stated, however, that the 3% across the board cut to contracted human service providers would damage programs and adversely impact consumers. She supports the original tax rate of 96.5 cents.
- **Nuevo Dia** – Nohemi Pacheco and a Salvadoran immigrant gentleman stated that continued support is necessary to prevent consumers from being incarcerated, in hospitals or even cemeteries. The Salvadoran gentleman stated that as a graduate, he has turned his life around and is now completing his education.
- **ARC** – Norman Hill stated that the Board must continue to concentrate on efforts to promote community-based healthcare,
- **Arlington County Community Services Board (CSB)** -- Carole Skelly, Jenette O’Keefe, Richard Wakefield, Peter DeHaven, Clyde Mazyck, Dennis Manning (Community Residences), Keith Whyte, Van Newstrom, Bonnie Wehr, Sharon Wentlin, Scott Brannon, James Edgar, Dennis Defure, Mark Nation, George Hardman, Matt McCracken (NAMI), Tom Quinn (NAMI). The aforementioned spoke about the estimated \$1,500,000 cuts in Commonwealth and local funding to the Community Services Board’s Mental Health, Substance Abuse Services, and Intellectual Disability Services programs that would impact all consumers. Speakers affirmed that consumers would have to wait very long periods to see counselors, that the ratio of case management was unacceptable to best practices and industry standards, contractual services would be severely impacted or terminated, there would be more incidents of crime, family abuse, hospitalization, and a general worsening in the general quality of life for all Arlingtonians. The speakers requested that the Board provide funding to fill gaps and not reduce current funding. Speakers represented the CSB, NAMI, Community Residences and many were consumers.
- **AHIF, MIPAP, Housing Grants**-- Nina Janopaul (CEO of APAH), Sarah Bailey (Executive Director of Alliance for Housing Solutions). Speakers requested that AHIF be funded at the \$5,000,000 per annum level as requested by the Housing Commission, that the supply of CAFs be increased, and that housing grants be increased by \$289,000. Arlington New Directions also provided its support that the MIPAP program was \$900,000 short and \$1,000,000 should be given to support local housing grants.
- **ECDC** -- Frances Cornell spoke on behalf of the African Community Center at the Ethiopian Community Development Corporation which supports recent immigrants/asylees. She requested that the program receive continued funding
- **OAR** – Paul Evans, Treasurer of Offender Aid and Restoration, asked that the Board not implement the 3% across the board cut to human services contracted agencies.

- **AFAC** – Paul Evans, Treasurer for Arlington Food Assistance Center, stated that an additional 25% families had been served this fiscal year. He requested the Board approve the \$350,000 that is targeted for AFAC.

Approximate speaker distribution:

- 15 – Aurora Hills Senior Center (opposition to closure)
- 11 – Libraries (opposition to reduced hours and media acquisition)
- 14 – Madison Center Children’s Programs (opposition to defunding)
- 8 – Youth Arts Funding in Public Schools (opposition to defunding)
- 18—ACPD (opposition to salary freeze for all County employees and higher contributions toward medical)
- 7 – Invasive Plants, Tree Planting, Acquisition of Open Space (opposition to proposed cuts)
- 4 – Project Family (opposition to proposed cuts)
- 3 – Libraries (general opposition to cuts)
- 14 – Community Services Board (opposition to local and State cuts to all program areas)
- 1 – Offender Aid Restoration (OAR)
- 1 – AFAC (fund \$350,000 for additional needs)
- 4 - Langston-Brown Community Center (continued funding)
- 1 – Mosquito program (opposition to cuts)
- 1 – Arts (support for)
- 10 – Other (angry rants, random babbling, minor obsession with caboose on W&OD trail)
- 1 – Shirlington Employment and Education Center
- 3—Housing Grants, AHIF, MIPAP (reductions)
- 2 – BRAVO (opposition to budget cut)
- 2—EDG/ECDC (opposition to programmatic funding cuts)
- 9 – ASPAN (funding for year-round shelter)
- 4 – 3% across the board human services funding cuts (opposition)
- 3- additional funding for public transportation
- 2—additional funding for bicycle paths
- 2 -- Restoration of Lubber Run Amphitheatre
- 3 – increased budget for community policing (safety, parking violators, etc)

Public Comments Made at the County Board Hearing Held April 24 and 27, 2010

Doris Ray provided comments on the FY 2011-2015 Five Year Consolidated Plan, Item #22 on the County Board Agenda for April 27, 2010. Staff has outlined the issues as relayed to them by Ms. Ray and has provided a response. They are the following:

- The Housing Need section (page 32) of the Consolidated Plan narratives should describe assessment data that is available related to residents of nursing homes to plan for possible transition into the community.

This sentence will be inserted into the section that addresses Housing Problem by Disability:

A Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2009 national report identified nursing home residents that expressed/indicated a preference to return to the community. In Arlington nursing homes, 5.4% of residents receiving Medicare that were under 65 and 4.4% of residents below 65 and not on Medicare indicated such a preference. Arlington County is working on integrating these individuals back into the community by providing Permanent Supportive Housing Units .

- The Needs of Public Housing Strategy section (page 58) should emphasize the County's intention to respond to HUD NOFA targeted to non-elderly disabled persons.

This sentence will be inserted into the section that addresses the County's PHA Plan:

Apply for additional Section 8 units should they become available, which includes the recent notice of funding availability for rental assistance for non-elderly persons with disabilities.

- The Specific Special Needs Objectives section (page 168) should be more specific about addressing the needs of all special needs persons, not just Community Services Board clients.

This sentence will be inserted into the section that addresses the County's Priorities and Specific Objectives related to Non-Homeless Special Needs:

Arlington's Five-Year Supportive Housing Plan, adopted in 2005, has produced 163 apartments to date. Another 97 units are in development and an additional 26 in predevelopment. Arlington's five year goal is to produce the 262 additional units required to achieve the County's overall goal of 425 supportive housing units. Arlington's Supportive Housing Plan addresses the housing needs of persons with serious mental illness; persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities; persons with physical disabilities, persons with two or more disabilities; homeless persons & families with disabilities who need supportive services; youth transitioning from youth services to adult services; and elders with special needs. The chart below depicts the current inventory.

- Ms. Ray recommended the addition of another preference in the Public Housing Strategy section (page 58), to emphasize a waiting list preference for persons with physical disabilities.

HUD regulations do not allow us to create a preference for physically disabled persons over those with other types of disabilities. All single households are treated alike and when those with disabilities receive assistance, the payment standard can be increased to address the particular barriers and expenses that are incurred. The County plans to apply for all additional voucher funds available, including the special purpose vouchers for those with disabilities.

- Ms. Ray noted the Specific Special Needs Objectives section (page 173) that addresses Housing Grants resources should give preference to disabled persons.

This local program currently serves more than 200 disabled households, and the program has always remained open to meet the demand from eligible applicants. There is a project-based component that targets supportive housing and is Section 8 project-based “look alike”.