

## Affordable Housing Working Group

August 28, 2014 Meeting Notes

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Members present: Michael Spotts, Robert Bushkoff, Richard Donohoe, John Grant, Joan Lawrence, Dave Leibson, Kathryn Scruggs, Steve Sockwell, Kathryn Scruggs, Saul Reyes, Candice Rose

Staff: Melissa Cohen, David Cristeal, Joel Franklin, Russell Danao-Schroeder, Cynthia Stevens

Consultants: Lisa Sturtevant, Amy Clark, Keith Frederick, Jeanette Chapman

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### 1. **Welcome and Introductions.**

Michael Spotts called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm

2. **Public Comment.** Reid Goldstein addressed the Working Group and expressed disappointment that the County policy to distribute affordable housing has not been effective and that affordable housing efforts have exacerbated geographic inequalities.

3. **Approval of June meeting notes** - July meeting notes were approved by acclamation

4. **Consultant report and update.** Lisa Sturtevant delivered a presentation on the housing needs analysis (see presentation for content).

Kathryn Scruggs asked whether the needs analysis considered the needs of households between 60 and 120 percent of the area median income. Noting that County funds generally are targeted to households below 60 percent AMI while those above are on their own. She also asked whether we have surveyed County and Arlington Public School employees. Keith Frederick responded that the survey of County employees is in progress and that so far we have received 500 responses, noting that nearly three quarters indicated that they did not want to live in Arlington County.

Saul Reyes asked if the three-quarters gave any reasons why they did not want to live in the county. Keith responded that that was not how the questions were structured but that when we met with Virginia Hospital Center they indicated a similar response rate of employees that wanted to live farther away, in part because they felt that they would be less likely to be called in.

### 5. **Task Force Reports**

- a. **Geographic Distribution**

John Grant introduced the presentation on the recommendations of the Geographic Distribution Task Force. Given the data that was presented in the housing needs analysis the larger problem at hand is of maintaining a sufficient supply rather than where the housing is located. The Task Force supports the overall objective to distribute affordable housing throughout the county; it is important to the fabric of the community to have affordable housing throughout the county. At the practical level the implementation is

more difficult; we can only preserve affordable housing where multi-family housing currently exists.

Michael Spotts announced upcoming events including the Housing Study Forum on September 22 and the Workshop on Saturday, October 11 while staff resolved technical difficulties with the presentation.

Joel Franklin provided an overview of the Geographic Distribution Task Force's process and recommendations (see presentation).

Michael Spotts underscored the importance of land use plans and policies in that zoning dictates where multi-family housing can be built in the county. When opportunities arise for rezoning through planning processes the voices of those supporting the distribution of affordable housing throughout the county need to be heard.

David Leibson added that a key strategy for implementing the Housing Study is additional density.

Kathryn Scruggs commented that "public land for public good" is also a tool that can aid in achieving greater distribution of affordable housing; where housing might be built above a library, community center, recreation center, or school – not to take parkland or green space.

Bob Bushkoff urged the Working Group to keep reality in mind, given what the current use of land and that the county is largely built out. We need to look at areas where we can accomplish our goals and build.

Michael Spotts mentioned Lee Highway as an area that may have some potential and looking at different types of housing to meet different needs, possible opportunities in single family zoned areas to enable aging in place through accessory dwelling units.

b. Strategies Task Force

Melisa Cohen presented the recommendations from the strategies task force (see presentation and report)

Steve Sockwell asked whether there had been discussion on changing the ordinance to increase the amount of money for the AHIF contribution or increasing the number of on-site affordable units. Staff responded that, no, the group did not discuss that. Steve Sockwell continued that the GMU presentation at the last meeting seemed to indicate that other jurisdictions require more than Arlington.

Bob Bushkoff mentioned that Fairfax does require units to be built in Tysons (without an in lieu payment option) but that the affordability is at 120% of Area Median Income, not 60% as in Arlington. Steve Sockwell commented that we should look into that.

John Grant commented that some recommendations would need approval from Richmond and that we should carefully consider the likelihood of success before investing too much effort and resources. Mellissa Cohen replied that Arlington would have to be smart about which initiatives to bring forward to the state and to be well prepared.

Bob Bushkoff suggested that an analysis of the recommendations be done to determine which ones need legislative approval from Richmond. Bob also urged that the County take advantage of provisions that are currently allowed such as assessing affordable housing as affordable housing which we are not currently doing.

David Cristeal mentioned that another area to look at in the ordinance might be the condominium subsidy. For onsite ownership it might make sense to look at the 60% AMI cap and consider adjusting.

Dave Leibson maintained that we should not drop recommendations just because Richmond may not approve.

## 6. Subcommittee Reports

### a. Civic Engagement.

Thanks to members who participated in the County Fair. Fairgoers enjoyed learning more about housing in Arlington through the quiz that provoked some interest in housing issues.

Speaker toolkits are available for those who did not receive theirs last month.

The CE subcommittee will meet Friday, September 5 at 4:15 on the seventh floor of the County building.

### b. Needs Analysis

The Needs analysis report will be sent out to members on September 11 and the NA subcommittee will meet on September 18 at 6:15pm at the Walter Reed Community Center to discuss.

## 7. Announcements

David Cristeal urged members and those in attendance to participate in upcoming Affordable Housing month events, including a bus tour and bicycle tour of affordable housing developments.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm