

Thank you to you, Chair Garvey, and each of you, colleagues, for your kindness as I joined the Board last year and your commitment to sound policy that serves all our residents well. We had a very good 2019 because of the hard work of each of you, our talented and committed staff, our advisory commissions, and our thoughtful and engaged community.

Specifically, on two of the five priorities that led me to run for the Board:

- **Economic growth that benefits our whole community, and**
- **100 percent renewable electricity by 2035**

we made significant progress last year that leads me to be optimistic about 2020.

**On our economy**, we ended 2019 with an office vacancy rate of under 15 percent, down from more than 16.2 percent last year. Credit goes to our staff and to you, colleagues, who have worked so hard to bring down our vacancy rate. This year, we must continue our commitment to inclusive economic growth with a greater focus on small businesses.

**On our goal of achieving 100 percent renewable electricity by 2035**, the Community Energy Plan (CEP) included short-term targets and ambitious longer-term goals. I will continue to focus on increasing energy efficiency and on the steps we need to take to get to 100 percent renewable electricity by 2035. I look forward to working on the CEP implementation framework over the coming months.

The three other priorities that led me to seek this office:

- **Ending child hunger in Arlington by 2022**
- **Commitment and Creativity on housing affordability**
- **Building the Schools we need to educate every child well**

will be my focus this year.

**I'll start with child hunger, since it will be a mostly new body of work.** Thank you, Chair Garvey, in particular, for supporting this work. I appreciate your insights and partnership as well as the support each of you have offered, colleagues.

We know that child hunger exists in Arlington. APS served 31 percent of its students through the free and reduced school meals programs in 2018. Arlington Food Assistance Center estimates that it served more than 4,580 children in 2019. Both DHS and APS staff confirm that they hear from and worry about children going hungry or receiving inadequate nutrition when they are not in school—on weekends, winter breaks, and during the summer when summer school is not in session.

However, as you've said, Chair Garvey and Mr. Dorsey, we need additional data to better identify the gaps where students are not being served, and to make sure children are receiving

nutritious food. Feeding America—the nation’s network of food banks—calls this a “missing meals” analysis: a quantitative study to learn when and where children are going hungry.

Collaboration and coordination between the County and APS will be critical. Thanks to you Mr. Manager, Deputy County Manager Michelle Cowan, and Director of Human Services Anita Freidman as well as our School Board colleagues, we are primed to obtain a better quantitative understanding of where children are going hungry and a qualitative analysis of how we can make sure children in Arlington receive nutritious food over the coming months. I look forward to this work as one way to advance equity over the coming year.

**Second, housing affordability.** We made significant progress on housing affordability last year via additional resources (the Crystal House parcel and well over \$24 million in Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) contributions from the community benefits associated with site plans), and targeted changes to our zoning ordinance (removal of caps on bonus community benefit for housing in the corridors and changes to senior housing).

Our progress, however, comes in a housing market that is making renting and homeownership in Arlington more and more expensive. This year offers a new opportunity to rise to the challenge—and we will need to step up with commitment and creativity that meet the moment. The commitment we made in our Guidance to the Manager on the FY 2021 Budget to the data we need on those living below 30 percent of Area Median Income—more than, 26,000 people living in households with income of less than \$36,000—will be key. (2018 American Community Survey Estimate.)

So will, in my view, providing the \$9 million in additional AHIF funding or as close to it as possible. I am mindful that we will have other needs in the budget, but I believe AHIF funding addresses the four questions from our equity framework very well.

We will also need to be creative. On the rental side, this means partnering with nonprofit partners such as the Arlington Community Foundation and looking for innovative solutions with the Alliance for Housing Solutions and partners in the field. With respect to homeownership, the missing middle housing-type study is set to be completed this summer: thanks to the Manager and staff for this work as part of Housing Arlington. I look forward to the results and to engaging with the community to develop targeted tools and solutions to help make homeownership possible for more Arlingtonians.

**Third, building the schools we need to educate every child well.** We made progress on meeting our schools’ needs and planning for their future last year. Thank you, Vice Chair Gutshall, for your leadership on the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (JFAC) in support of thoughtful planning on this issue. I look forward to working with you as a liaison to JFAC again this year. Thank you, Mr. Manager, for sharing with the School Board the list of sites that can help address our need for additional capacity for APS students. Your letter represents a step forward on collaboration.

The next steps to address our **school capacity challenges** will come through our collaboration with the School Board through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which will be considered over the next six months. I am mindful that we will have many competing priorities, but believe it is consistent with our work last year and Arlington's longstanding commitment to education to prioritize **high school capacity in the short term** and middle and elementary school seats in the longer term.

Other issues came up last year and will undoubtedly again this year. I am grateful for the work on the behavioral health docket last year which was a priority for me and will continue to be engaged on issues related to equity for our most vulnerable residents. I also believe that good governance requires additional investment in our **stormwater system** to respond to high intensity weather events like the July 8<sup>th</sup> storm. We cannot prevent all flooding, but we should respond and become more resilient. I am confident we will do so and I will make this a priority.

As I close, thanks to you, Ms. Cristol, Mr. Dorsey, and Madame Chair for your work on transportation issues. I believe we are headed in the right direction in terms of investment and accountability in part because of your work.

Thank you for your time, and thank you for your continued service to Arlington. Happy New Year.