

## Arlington County Tenant –Landlord Commission Meeting

### Meeting Minutes July 11, 2018

**Commissioners present:** Michael Campbell, Kirit Mookerjee, Kristin Clegg, Kendon Krause (Chair), Kellen MacBeth, Bismah Ahmed. **Absent:** Zachary Butler

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair, Kendon Krause.

**Public Comment:** No public comment

Approval of Meeting Notes – Meeting notes were approved, after noting minor corrections.

#### **Current Business: Relocation Plan – The Carlin Apartments**

Florence Webb, Senior Development Project Manager of RHF (Retirement Housing Foundation) made a brief presentation giving highlights of the Relocation Plan. According to the relocation plan, 30-day notices will begin in December, however actual relocations will take place at the beginning of 2019, after the holidays. An 18- month period is anticipated for renovations. A tenant meeting was held on July 10 at which residents expressed concern about the relocation process, for example, how will moving be handled. They were assured that the moving company would provide packing and unpacking services. HOU are hired relocation consultants who will be available on-site part-time to address residents' inquiries. Notices would be sent for each phase, which is expected to take 4-5 weeks. Commission members had a few general questions about comparable size of temporary units, adequate notice being given for meetings and noise mitigation. One question pertained to page 15 of the document with reference to "failure of residents to adhere to the plan" section IX. There was some discussion about whether the company anticipated that some clients would object to moving. In response, Ms. Webb, indicated that in general most residents are excited at the prospect of a remodeled apartment building, but that the proposed language was considered important.

Mr. Belinsky had three comments on the plan- 1. That the rent limits should be updated to reflect 2018 increase and how this may affect anyone moving in. 2. Any TAF subsidy? 3. The TLC meeting on the relocation plan in September should be advertised as a public meeting for residents to attend. One resident in attendance was asked if he had any concerns, he asked for a copy of the Relocation Plan. Ms. Webb was advised that even preliminary documents could be made available to the residents to keep them informed and allow them to make comments. Staff – Hector Mercado indicated that a copy of the final document would be posted on the County's website. Commissioners expressed satisfaction with the Relocation Plan, and it will be voted on at the Commission's September meeting.

#### **Discussion items - Housing and Returning Residents**

Commissioner MacBeth spearheaded a discussion about whether formerly incarcerated residents have an equal chance to housing in Arlington and what barriers they face. The context for the discussion was based on the recent Library Book discussion of "The Color of Law" by Rothstein. Do we have a population of formerly incarcerated residents who are adversely affected and should the Tenant Landlord Commission consider this and possibly make recommendations for change? In general, requirements vary among property management companies; many companies do not require background checks. Managers are most concerned about ensuring that a safe environment is maintained for all residents. Residents with violent criminal backgrounds and drug convictions, if know

will be declined for housing. Katie Steinback of Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR) commented that most clients from OAR often would sublease or live with family as a lack of credit or rental history would prevent them from qualifying for regular housing. Comments from Aruna Minhas, the representative from the Human Rights Office indicated that there is no known information or data on this as a concern at her department. However, if there is need to look at this matter, Arlington is not new to advancing new ideas or changes to laws. She advised that further research be done, compare what is done in adjacent jurisdictions, such as DC and advance the discussion. The Chair of the Human Rights Commission advised that it is critical to conduct adequate research, provide adequate education on the laws, to better inform the discussion and to get support.

#### Source of Income and Housing discrimination

Commissioner MacBeth also introduced discussion on how housing vouchers and other housing subsidies (source of income) are considered by housing providers and whether this is a known problem and if so what is the scope of the problem in Arlington. Commissioner Clegg, commented on landlords being required to consider other sources of income, and the implications for property managers. This becomes a contract over which they have no control, the requirements are often onerous and there is a loss of income for private owners who accept vouchers. Expressed concern about what incentives, if any, the County is willing to provide to encourage housing providers to use these programs. The final analysis was, that this required further research and data to determine if it was an area that the Tenant Landlord Commission would investigate and discuss further.

#### Outreach proposal – Tenant Forum

Commissioner MacBeth proposed the idea that the Tenant Landlord Commission prepare and host a Tenant Forum to assess what issues are important to the rental community and hold workshops on specific topics. He saw this as an opportunity to partner with other Commissions such as CDCAC and the Housing Commission.

#### **Reports**

Chair Report – Chair, Krause reminded members of the upcoming Eviction Forum on Tuesday July 17 and the County Fair. Members were invited to send ideas for participation in the County Fair. No decision was taken on the form of participation.

Members Reports – Commissioner Mookerjee reported on his attendance at one of the Big Ideas forum held by the County and shared an infographic with the members.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.