

Housing Discrimination Subcommittee Meeting Notes

Tenant-Landlord Commission's (TLC) Housing Discrimination Subcommittee meeting which took place on 10/16/19 from 7:07 PM until 8:06 PM

Attendees: Roland Watkins, Kirit Mookerjeet, Michael Pruitt, and Kellen MacBeth

- **Housing Matters Forum (10/3 & 10/7) Debrief** - The attendees discussed feedback from tenant and landlord participants at the Fair Housing-related Housing Matters Forums which took place earlier this month. The tenant forum attendees appeared to focus more on property maintenance issues rather than specific Fair Housing concerns. Attendees did bring up concerns about retaliation from landlords and their hesitation to bring complaints forward. Regarding source of income (SOI) protection, the notes from the tenant event showed that some participants appeared to favor it while at least one attendee was not in favor. The landlord forum had participation from landlords, property managers, as well as members of the public with an interest in the topic. Some attendees at the landlord forum spoke in favor of SOI protection and protection for residents with criminal history while others spoke against these policies. Roland, who attended the tenant forum, stated that he would like to see more coordination between the Office of Human Rights (OHR)/Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the TLC/Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD). He was disappointed that one of the slides used during the event had the wrong contact information for the OHR and did not emphasize the role that the OHR/HRC could play in resolving these complaints. Kellen pointed out that he was told that CPHD invited OHR to participate in the forums but that they declined. Roland recommended that in the future, CPHD/TLC coordinate with the HRC to ensure participation. Kellen noted that the guidance provided to landlords might not have been as detailed as he would have liked and may not have provided that much value. This may be due to the complexities in the law itself but he felt that for smaller landlords without their own legal experts, more details are likely needed to ensure compliance with fair housing laws. He also noted that the differences between Arlington and Virginia fair housing definitions were not mentioned at the landlord forum which he had hoped would be. Overall, though, the subcommittee members felt that the events were helpful and that the CPHD and Department of Human Services (DHS) staff did a very good job with the events.
- **Barriers to Housing for Residents with Criminal History Event Planning** - Kellen handed out the draft outline for the event (attached) and provided an overview of what he envisions for the event. Roland noted that the HRC gave an award to a former convict for his reentry work and that he may be a good speaker for the event. Attendees also suggested that local shelters be added to the list of suggested partners. For suggested government partners, attendees recommended adding the OHR and Commonwealth Attorney's Office. For Interest groups, attendees recommended adding the Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC), Black Lives Matter, and Indivisible Arlington. Attendees also suggested adding a moderator role for the event. Kellen stated that he plans to send out an email inviting the

suggested participants to an initial meeting to see who would like to lead the event planning and determine next steps.

- **FHAIR Research/Outreach Update** - Kellen stated that he is working to determine when to bring the FHAIR proposal back to the TLC for consideration but that he is still collecting additional information/research. He has reached out to the Northern Virginia Apartment Association (NVAA) for assistance meeting with a landlord focus group per their offer over the summer. He is waiting on a response from them. He is also waiting on NVAA and the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) to let him know when they plan to send out the landlord survey the TLC provided to them in September. He noted that he has not received clear communication from either group on why the survey has not been sent out. He is hopeful that he will hear something soon.
- **Other** - Roland shared a copy of the Destination 2027: Arlington's Plan for Achieving Health Equity by 2017 report (attached) and recommended that the TLC invite the steering committee to provide a brief at an upcoming meeting. The HRC recently received a presentation that was very helpful. The attendees agreed that both the HRC and the TLC should work together to discuss housing segregation and racial inequity throughout Arlington and potential recommendations to improve integration and reduce health, economic, and educational outcomes by race.