

## HOUSING COMMISSION

### APPROVED MEETING NOTES – January 16, 2020

Attendance			
	Present		Present
Arthur, Ben	Y	Quist, Dannielle	Y
Berkey, Eric	Y	Sims, Charles	Y
Blank, Rolf	Y		
Bray, Holly	Y	<b>Staff:</b>	
Browne, Paul		Franklin, Joel	Y
Edwards, Laura Saul	Y	<b>Planning Comm. Liaison:</b>	
Gee, Evelyn	-		
Hogan, Alice	Y		
Norris, Haley	Y	<b>Disability Advisory Comm Liason</b>	
		Ray, Doris	Y

**Held in:** Courthouse Plaza, 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Room 311

**Other Staff Present:** Russell Schroeder, Caitlin Jones, and Richard Tucker of the Housing Division, Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD).

#### **Public Comment**

Jim Hurysz said that Fairlington has gone from workforce housing to completely unaffordable luxury housing, so when you talk about missing middle you are just talking about Fairlington all over again. He said that he demands an end to new urbanism, it is just a gentrification charade. He said that affordable housing is targeted to 60% of area median income which is a very high income and workforce housing is nonexistent. He added that the trails and recreation is being repurposed for things it wasn't imagined for.

#### **Approval of Notes**

Holly Bray moved approval of the December 5, 2019 notes, Alice Hogan seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Ben Arthur abstaining.

#### **Introductory Remarks from the Chair**

Eric Berkey thanked Holly Bray for her years of service as chair and asked each Commission member to say their goal or goals for the coming year. David Tim, Vice Chair of the Tenant Landlord Commission, said that he would like to continue the progress the Commission has done last year especially around the work they did on evictions, he is looking forward to seeing the changes. Rolf Blank said that he has started to represent the Housing Commission on the Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee and that he is real interested in the eviction work and following what the State is doing about it. Danielle Quist said that she has become more aware of housing and school's issues and is very interested in missing middle and to help facilitate and expand the discussion for middle income housing and to allow for more affordable housing in north Arlington. Haley Norris said that her goal is to have the Commission be on the forefront of policy issues such as missing middle. Holly Bray said that most of the time we have not had a full Commission, but when we did we had subcommittees that worked, and we could vote and bring up what happened in those meetings at the full Commission meeting. She added that we can't build

our way out of this problem, we need to work on preserving what we have and to focus on moving people up, need to work on getting incomes increased. Laura Saul Edwards said that she is looking forward to getting her bearings and wants to know enough to be able to make a difference. She said that she is really interested in building and providing replacement housing and where housing and schools intersect. She added that she serves as the APS Facilities Advisory Commission representative to Plan Lee Highway and that we will have to figure out how new housing impacts school capacity. Ben Arthur said that his main issue is geographic distribution and would like to see more equity there. Alice Hogan said that the next two years will be important for housing policy and that it would be good to see the subcommittees become active again. Doris Ray said that she will be looking for the production of accessible and affordable housing for all economic levels. She noted that affordable housing means different things to people with different disabilities and that she is also interested in accessible technology. Eric Berkey said that he would like to find ways to have this Commission have more influence, it feels like we are reacting all the time and that we need to be more proactive and more effective in our advocacy.

County Board Member Matt de Ferranti said that he is focusing this year on homelessness; working towards getting an extra \$9 million for the Affordable Housing Investment Fund, with a focus on households below 30%; and missing middle.

### Digital Equity Action Plan

#### Staff Presentation

Digital Equity refers to the assurance that all individuals, including the most disadvantaged populations, have the information technology capacity required to fully participate in society. This not only includes a digital connection but also education, training, and programs to enable residents to take full advantage of available resources. In Arlington 10 percent of households do not have access to a home broadband internet connection and 72 percent of households without access to home broadband internet connection earn \$75,000 or less annually. Arlington's Digital Equity Action Plan will establish a policy framework, set guiding principles, and develop strategies for achieving Arlington's digital equity goals, with community input. Arlington's Digital Equity Goals are:

- **Connectivity:** Ability to connect to affordable home broadband internet options.
- **Access:** Accessing the internet and technology resources with a device.
- **Usability:** Digital skills training and education are prioritized and usability of County resources is improved.
- **Program Sustainability:** Strategies to achieve digital equity goals are sustainable, the community is engaged on the issue, and County structures are in place to support goals.

#### Commission Questions and Discussion

Laura Saul Edwards asked for the presentation to be posted on the website and asked if there is any way to measure the impact gap at Arlington Mill. Holly Hartell said that we won't be able to tell if they went from a grade B to an A, but a survey will get at satisfaction and other metrics. Laura Saul Edwards asked if there are any grants from the State that would subsidize internet to make this sustainable. Caitlin Jones said that there is a Federal program that is pretty cumbersome and that there is reduced cost internet, but the problem with those programs is that the speeds are very slow. She added that we are trying to establish what is affordable and what a good speed would be. Danielle Quist said that there are things that can be done that measure besides looking at the grade level. Holly Bray said that she can provide some HUD studies on the subject. Danielle Quist said that APS is trying to get everyone on an iPad but not all schools allow the kids to take them home. Holly Hartell added that staff is exploring what key indicators of success would be and Rolf Blank added that the Community Energy Plan does a good job at benchmarking.

Ben Arthur asked how the 100% utilization at the library works and Holly Hartell said that they are limited by time and then kicked off. Ben Arthur asked what is preventing us from expanding it, space or money. Holly Hartell said that it is a little bit of both, but it is worth exploring and to look at how easy it is for the community to get to the library or popup up libraries. Alice Hogan asked if staff has talked with APAH on who participated, and Caitlin Jones said that they are still working with them. Alice Hogan suggested that if the internet company knows that they are getting a number of new customers with a new building, then maybe you could get a reduced rate. Alice Hogan also suggested using a different term other than sustainability since it is tied to environment. Doris Ray said that there would be an extra expense for not only to purchase the accessible equipment but also for the software and getting trained on the equipment. She recommended making this presentation to the Disability Advisory Commission. Haley Norris asked how this relates to Arlington County's internet and Holly Hartell said that it is a piece of it, one of the things is to use the County's existing infrastructure.

### **Missing Middle Housing Study Scope of Work**

#### **Staff Presentation**

The Missing Middle Housing Study will examine how new housing types and forms could be introduced in Arlington that increase and diversify the County's housing supply, guided by the following desired outcomes and some key considerations. Drawn from the 2015 AHMP, the 2018 Big Idea Roundtables, County Board direction for Housing Arlington and the Fall 2019 Housing Arlington Community Conversation Series, the desired outcomes of this effort include:

- A shared understanding of Arlington's housing shortfall and missing middle housing gap (Phase 1);
- an adopted policy that supports preservation of existing Missing Middle housing stock and production of new missing middle housing types for County Board consideration (Phase 2);
- identification of Comprehensive Plan and other County policies and practices to be further reviewed to support of the goals of this process (Phase 2); and
- the ability for new housing type alternatives to be built that meet Arlington's definition of "missing middle housing", offering more affordability and design that is complementary and compatible with the scale and style of their intended neighborhoods (Phase 3).

#### **Commission Questions and Discussion**

Charles Sims asked how you can make it profitable. Russell Schroeder said that staff hasn't targeted an affordable housing range, once we identify the types and do some economic feasible we can see who it would be affordable to. Charles Sims said that he understands that but who would develop it and Kellie Brown said that we have heard from the development community that if the zoning was right they would build it. Holly Bray said that she didn't hear anything about school capacity or transit capacity and Kellie Brown said that school capacity is another one of the impacts that we want to look at and discuss with the community and added that there is a need for other elements to be looked at to support this effort. Danielle Quist asked if these are the same considerations we have for affordable housing and Kellie Brown said that it will be a little different because where we are putting affordable housing now is where it is already planned for. Danielle Quist asked if you are looking at putting this in the middle of single-family neighborhoods and Richard Tucker said that we are going to have a conversation on where it is appropriate. Alice Hogan suggested that it should be more explicit in the presentation to show where we are looking at and where it isn't currently allowed. Alice Hogan noted that when she sees large houses going up, that she could see that two families could live in those and be the same exact envelope. Alice Hogan

asked what staff means when they mention financial feasibility and Russell Schroder responded that it is looking to see if a builder would construct it.

Alice Hogan said that she doesn't hear anything about rental and Kellie Brown said that we don't have any preferences and are interested in increasing supply and types of housing. Alice Hogan suggested adding in some rental language and to provide materials in other languages. Eric Berkey recommended using the Housing Commission as a policy sounding board, especially in a subcommittee meeting. Eric Berkey also said that it will be important to show where public input has changed the direction or changed a recommendation and that you should consider the unintended consequences, so that it doesn't boomerang and actually increase the price of housing. Rolf Blank recommended showing models or examples of where this has worked, people respond to that. Rolf Blank also suggested looking at how the cost of housing has gone up because of regulations and how that might stop us. Laura Saul Edwards suggested staff should show the impacts to the capacity of nearby schools based on the various types of missing middle, this is not to discourage missing middle housing, but an opportunity to plan better and to work with APS. Charles Sims asked if there was any discussion on expanding high density beyond the current metro boundaries and Russell Schroeder said that is beyond the scope of this study. Doris Ray said that the engagement needs to be accessible, because the electronic forums like Facebook are not very accessible. Doris Ray said that by producing duplexes and fourplexes you will cut into the number of accessible units in the community. Eric Berkey suggested that disability groups as well as veteran groups be included in the engagement. Danielle Quist recommend staff go to each civic association. Kellie Brown said that they are looking at combined organizations like the Lee Highway Alliance that combine a number of civic associations.