

Arlington County Tenant-Landlord Commission Meeting

Meeting Notes – January 10, 2018

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

Public Comment: Mr. Belinskiy had a presentation with points that referred to a “Anti-displacement policy”; concern for the proposed allocation for moving costs associated with relocation based on room sizes. In response to the latter point, Commissioners noted that previous discussion about this stands and that this will be reviewed periodically.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – The minutes were accepted with identification of three corrections.

Current Business

1. Queens Court Relocation Plan

Staff from APAH - Kim Painter, Chief of Staff and Laura London, Acting Director of Real Estate presented the Queens Court Relocation plan and fielded questions from Commission members on the plan. A Power Point presentation is available for reference. The project consists of three garden apartment buildings, built in 1941, containing 39 one-bedroom and studio apartments. The buildings will be demolished and replaced with 249 new units, a public park and parking garage. The new property would comprise two and three bedroom units for households with incomes at 40-60% AMI. A detailed timeline was included and construction will begin in Spring 2019 and projected to be completed late 2021. A detailed tenant profile was included in the plan. There were several follow up questions related to parking- on site as well as off-site, utilities- cost and billing, water and sewer metering and ongoing communication with tenants to inform them of the timeline and any financial assistance that maybe available. The APAH representatives provided responses to the questions.

2. Preparation/Discussion for meeting with Board Liaison

Chair, Kendon Krause indicated that the Board Liaison for the T-L Commission, Libbey Garvey was scheduled to visit in February. The following suggestions for discussion were considered:

- An understanding of the flow of communication between the Board and Departments; how different departments communicate on a topic such as approvals for Relocation plans and other actions, generally
- Commissioners are interested in hearing Ms. Garvey’s expectations of the Commission, what her priorities are as they relate to the work of the Tenant-Landlord Commission
- Commissioner Macbeth suggested that it would be helpful if the meeting included the Board liaison as well as County Housing Division staff to better understand the role of the Commission.
- Feedback on suggestions provided by the Commission with regard to mediation for tenants and landlords, data collection, ways in which the commission and its roles can be promoted to the community.

3. Work Plan discussion

Community Outreach and education

- Holding a T-L Commission meeting in the community to raise awareness of the Commission. This included discussion on how best to determine where to hold the meetings, if the decision should be determined by buildings where there are or have been complaints, should it be related to the location of a relocation plan? Saul Reyes, Director of Bu-gata, was asked to provide information about tenant concerns and possible suggestions for a location to hold an off-site meeting.
- Other comments related to outreach, included the suggestion for Commissioners to rotate attendance at tenant meetings and other community meetings such as Monday meetings with the Board.
- “Piggy-back” on other community and commission meetings where topics of interest to the Commission are being discussed, for example, the Housing Commission and Planning Commission meetings
- The question of more data from Code Enforcement was discussed. The need to better understand what were prevalent tenant issues through better data collection and reporting.
- The task of providing a year- end report was noted from the Commission’s Charter and staff indicated that this would be researched and presented.
- Presentations - Parking study and proposal to reduce parking requirement for affordable units.
- Code Enforcement – update on One Stop Initiative and it’s use as a data source.
- Departmental presentation showing approval process for projects including those for which a Relocation Plan is needed.
- What types of issues clients served by nonprofits may encounter, and if these can be noted
- It was suggested that Saul reyes, Executive Director of Bu-Gata give a short report on tenant complaints and issues.

4. Organization definitions

Commissioner Mookerjee identified the need to consider a formal definition of “tenant organizations” in the County’s Zoning Ordinance. This was noted during the Historic designation process for Westover. In his view, this is necessary as tenants comprised the majority of residents, being affected and unless formally recognized as, say Civic Associations, they may be overlooked. It was agreed that the topic be researched to understand the role of these organizations in the County, before determining a definition. Commissioner Mookerjee will report back.

A Housing Conservation Districts working group is being formed. Commissioner, Krause and Mookerjee will participate.

Chair’s Report – Berkeley TAF- fifteen households have been awarded Tenant Assistance Funds in the Berkeley project, many tenants have moved out as phase I of the project has begun.

Staff report – Announcements – Landlord Seminar to be included in the Housing Expo which takes place on April 14. Arlington Neighborhood Conference is being planned, it is an opportunity to engage local associations. A summary of the tenant meeting held at the Shelton in December was given.

The meeting adjourned at 9:37p.m.