

## Arlington County Tenant-Landlord Commission

### Virtual Meeting

#### Meeting Notes – March 10, 2021

**Commissioners present:** David Timm (Chair), Kirit Mookerjee, Bismah Ahmed, Elyse Hayes, Kristin Clegg, Nicole Merlene, Emily Camardo, Matthew Whitfield, Esq, Christopher Wimbush.

**Staff Present:** Rolda Nedd, Hector Mercado, Jennifer Daniel

A recording of the meeting is available on the County's [webpage](#).

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. followed by a roll call.

**Public Comment** – One registered speaker, who was unable to connect.

**Approval of meeting notes** – Meeting minutes for the month of February were unanimously approved.

#### **Presentations**

1. DHS Housing Programs and Eviction Prevention Updates - Brooke Perez, Economic Independence Chief, DHS.

Ms Perez provided a detailed presentation including an overview of County Housing subsidy programs and updates on eviction prevention including, sources of funding, expenditures and residents served. The presentation also highlighted challenges including concerns about equity, public charge and access and potential future impact of the pandemic. It was explained that the combination of funding sources allows for flexibility in using the funds. A Commissioner asked about people being concern about “public charge” and the possible impact on requesting funding. In response Ms Perez indicated that the County is working to mitigate this by having residents apply directly to the nonprofit THRIVE. It was also pointed out that this policy was (as of today), eliminated by the current Administration. Another Commissioner asked how the amount of funding spent by Arlington compares to spending by nearby jurisdictions? It was pointed out that the level of spending is very high, but there was no information on comparison with other jurisdictions. There was a comment on people needing assistance in applying for unemployment insurance through VEC and whether the County can assist with this? In response Ms Perez indicated that staff can make direct referrals. Need to have information on the website to connect to assistance at VEC. Another question was posed about whether any funding and planning is taking place to address eviction impact after the moratoriums are lifted and any data collection to support reasons why eviction assistance is needed. Ms. Perez replied that the County intends to continue to assist residents as much as possible.

## 2. County Budget FY22 Housing Highlights, Marie Randall, Finance Supervisor, CPHD

Ms. Randall Provided a presentation on the Housing Division's Budget, as a subset of the larger County budget. She described the connection between DHS housing programs and CPHD's funding programs that address demand to support low income households' needs. Housing funding consists of AHIF (local funds), federal funds, loan repayments and developer contributions. County's efforts toward preventing evictions include waiver of multifamily loans through December 31, 2021, to address rent and vacancy losses and other income loss. County is embarking on a Capital Needs Assessment and Inventory of County loaned properties. Several questions regarding use of COVID contingency funding going forward. Suggested use of contingency funds towards CAF production. There are other options, such as Amazon proposal that may have greater impact, more investigation likely. Is there any help for smaller landlords who may be negatively impacted? Is use of funds for emergency housing grants more effective, than additional CAF production?

## 3. Eviction/Moratorium Subcommittee

**Eviction subcommittee**– Commissioners Whitefield, Clegg, Hayes, Merlene, Camardo, (Chairperson needed). In addition to previous charter (2019) this committee would focus on immediate effects of the pandemic and exploration of after moratorium impacts.

**Visibility/publicity subcommittee**- Commissioners Ahmed, Wimbush, Mookerjee (offered to be Chair). Purpose of the subcommittee is to promote the TLC to the wider community, encourage public comment, leverage resources.

**Housing Discrimination** – Commissioners Camardo, Timm and Wimbush (subcommittee Chair).

### Other Business

CDC Vaccination Partner Support – Request for TLC to be a partner, inclusion in public events. Commissioner Clegg moved a motion to support the request; there was unanimous agreement from Commission members.

Commissioner Camardo – Inquired about public comment speakers from last month's meeting and whether staff followed up and how Commissioners can be kept informed. Commissioner Wimbush questioned what mechanism there was, for landlords who are not good stewards, to be responsible? Whether there is anything the TLC could propose to address these types of issues. Commissioner Merlene commented on research in progress to be able to have options for residents; looking into a dispute resolution body.

Commissioner Merlene shared information on resident complaints at the Serrano and asked whether staff is aware. Staff informed her that regular updates will be coming to the TLC.

Member and staff Reports: None

Adjournment: Meeting ended at 8:36 p.m.