

Arlington County Tenant Landlord Commission

Virtual Meeting 7 p.m.

Meeting Notes, September 8, 2021

Commissioners present: David Timm (Chair), Kirit Mookerjee, Emily Camardo, Kristen Clegg, Nicole Merlene, Bismah, Ahmed, Matthew Whitefield.

Commissioners absent: Chris Whimbush

Staff: Rolda Nedd, Hector Mercado

Call to order and Roll Call at 7:03 p.m.

Public Comment-

- Marjorie Green (VOICE) representing Serrano tenants complimented the Commission and staff for the ongoing repair and testing activities taking place at the Serrano. She apprised the Commission of ongoing issues such as lack of proper communication with tenants, lack of adequate notice to make repairs and persistent issues such as leaking/bursting pipes and elevator outages. Ms. Green reiterated the need to hold AHC accountable to tenants and the County; for them to be respectful to tenants and the need to have a comprehensive plan of necessary repairs, so that tenants can be better prepared for service interruptions, information on compensation to residents and a possible timeframe for this. Commissioners noted the concerns. Chair Timm advised that the joint subcommittee would be meeting regularly and there will be continued attention to this property and other similar properties.
- Matthew Easley – Recently moved to Arlington in a newly renovated apartment where he experiences problems with pests, flooding and poor maintenance and tardy response from the manager. He was advised of options and given resources such as Legal Aid to call for further advise. Staff will follow up.

Meeting minutes from September were approved with no comments.

Marbella Relocation Plan – Staff from APAH and Housing Opportunities presented a summary of the Marbella Relocation Plan to the Commission. They provided an update on the timeline and informed the Commission that 52 out of 62 households have been surveyed. Construction will begin Spring 2022. There were no questions from Commission members. They were reminded to provide questions/comments in two weeks to Hector.

FY2022 Legislative Priorities – Chair Timm mentioned that Commissioners, Whitefield, Whimbush, Merlene and Housing Advocates had shared their ideas with him. Commissioner Ahmed mentioned that although the rental assistance program is working well, it might not be sustainable. Commissioner Whitefield updated the Commissioners on a recent Bill HP7001 which provides continuing protections to tenants for rent relief and with ERA 2 funding coming into effect in September, tenants would be able to apply directly to Virginia Housing for rent relief. Commissioner Mookerjee advised that if the TLC had any prioritized legislation, this would be the time to advance it to the County.

Subcommittee Reports

Housing Discrimination- Commissioner Camardo provided a summary of topics being addressed by the subcommittee- Source of Income, Tenants with criminal History and Housing Discrimination Testing.

Eviction Subcommittee- Commissioner Whitefield advised the Commission that the essence of the Landlord Pledge that he has previously proposed has become law. He requested ideas from the members for the subcommittee to research.

Publicity and Outreach Subcommittee- Commissioner Mookerjee summarized the major activities of the subcommittee – Compiling a list of tenant support groups to become affiliates. Discussed flyers which could be distributed at special events and apartment buildings. Greater visibility of websites- Housing Arlington and Engage Arlington webpages. Public Comment feedback form – this would provide a record of the speakers concerns, and a tracking mechanism for the Commission.

Staff Report- Rolda Nedd, provided information:

Emergency Housing Vouchers received by DHS from American Rescue Plan Act funding. 36 vouchers are available to the County to house homeless persons.

Affordable Housing Month Events- Housing Matters Forum- Financing Affordable Housing (October 14) and two Fair Housing Meetings – October 19 and 21. Live in Arlington Fair – October 23. More information to come. Chair, Timm encouraged members to participate in events.

No further business, the meeting ended at 8:02 p.m.