

# ALEXANDRIA HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES

In-Person | September 11, 2024

	Members Present	Members Absent	Staff
1	Aschalew Asabie (Zoom)		Eric Keeler, Housing Deputy Director
2		Yeshewase Ayele	Tamara Jovovic, Housing Program Manager
3	Felicia Brewster		Kim Cadena, Housing Analyst
4	Annette Bridges (Zoom)		Kenneth Turscak, Housing Analyst
5	Michael Butler		Christopher Do, Housing Analyst
6	Michael Doyle		Leon Vignes, Planning & Zoning
7	Betsy Faga		
8		Jon Frederick	
9		Michael Jackson	
10	Robyn Konkel		
11	Michelle Krocker		
12	Coss Lumbé		
13	Jan Macidull		
14		Shelley McCabe	
15		Melissa Sathe	
16	Peter Sutherland		
17	Sean Zielenbach		
18	Helen McIlvaine*, Housing		
	Alison Coleman*, DCHS		
	Guests	Affiliation	
1	Duncan Blair	Land, Clark, Carroll, Mendelson & Blair, PC	
2	Chandler Ian Wilkins		
3			
4			
5			

\*non-voting

## 1. Introduction and Chair Remarks (Chairs)

Co-Chair Sean Zielenbach called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Kenny Turscak

explained that participants on Zoom must have their camera on in order to count towards quorum. Sean Zielenbach welcomed AHAAC members and guests.

## **2. Consideration of an Affordable Housing Plan for 126 Longview Drive (Kenny Turscak/Duncan Blair)**

Kenny Turscak presented the Affordable Housing Plan for 126 Longview Drive. The project will construct 19 townhomes in the Taylor Run/Duke Street area, all of which are expected to be three-bedroom units with a den and parking. The project is seeking bonus density under Section 7-700, which will result in one committed affordable homeownership unit. The project will also provide a voluntary monetary contribution of approximately \$133,000.

Duncan Blair, the attorney for the Applicant, provided additional information about the project. He explained the three-bedroom layout and estimated that the market-rate units will likely be priced in the upper \$700,000 to \$800,000 range. He also discussed the unique location and traffic patterns in that area.

One Committee member asked staff about the precedent for rounding down the number of affordable units under the bonus density policy, which rounded the number of committed affordable units from 1.4 to 1. Staff explained that rounding to the nearest whole number is the City's current policy. While the number of required CAUs was rounded down in this case, staff provided examples of how it has yielded more units through rounding up in other cases.

Michelle Krocker motioned to approve the Affordable Housing Plan; Peter Sutherland seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Affordable Housing Plan.

## **3. Public Hearing on Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) & Consultation on the One-Year Action Plan (Kim Cadena)**

Kim Cadena presented the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to the Committee. Ms. Cadena explained the differences between the HUD Annual Plan, CAPER, and Consolidated Plan; namely, the CAPER focuses on how the City spent HUD funding during the year.

During FY24, the City funded the following programs: Transitional Assistance Program, Winter Shelter, Home Rehabilitation Loan Program, Rental Property Rehabilitation Program, and the Flexible Homebuyer Assistance Program. The City spent more money on rehabilitating rental housing and assisting first-time homebuyers than it budgeted for, but the City was able to draw from carryover funds from previous years and program income from loan repayments.

In terms of performance, the City exceeded its goals of providing winter shelter to 200 people and assisting nine first-time homebuyers. It met about half of its goal to prevent homelessness for 150 people by serving 79 people due to increased costs for security deposits and first month's rent. The City rehabilitated four homes out of its goal of eight

homes because the program is targeted for low-income households but there are fewer low-income households who own homes. The City has not completed rehabilitation of any rental housing units this year out of its goal of 205 units because one project is ongoing, and another is delayed for financial and ownership reasons.

One AHAAC member asked if money is provided to the renters when rental housing is rehabilitated. Mx. Cadena responded that money is provided to the nonprofit owner and noted that demand for the Rental Accessibility Modification Program (RAMP) and the Home Rehabilitation Program is down. Ms. McIlvaine noted that the number of low-income homeowners has decreased, and the program faces challenges finding architects. One AHAAC member suggested contacting the local American Institute of Architects (AIA) for architects and would reach out to people who likely qualify for the program.

For the Consolidated Plan goals, the City is making progress with all of its objectives. It is close to its goal of serving 1,000 people through the winter shelter but is facing difficulties with its objectives of preventing homelessness and making rental housing accessible.

One member asked if the Consolidated Plan will be included in the Housing 2040 Master Plan. Mx. Cadena confirmed that it is a topic that will be covered.

One member asked how homelessness is being measured. Mx. Cadena responded that DCHS tracks the number of people assisted by their homelessness programs.

One member asked how Alexandria is doing relative to its peers, including Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun Counties. Mx. Cadena stated that every jurisdiction has different programs, goals, and restrictions so it is difficult to draw comparisons. HUD only provides aggregated statistics about who is served by its programs. One member noted that for homelessness, data is congregated by COG. Mx. Cadena elaborated that homelessness is addressed by a federal program with general requirements, but CDBG and HOME funds depend on the needs of each community.

One member asked if the numbers reflect the City's demographics. Mx. Cadena noted that 99% of those served were extremely low-income because of the winter shelter. 9% of those assisted identified as Hispanic or Latino, 53% identified as multiracial, and 36% identified as Black.

Mx. Cadena identified construction on the Seminary Road townhouses, the Pendleton Rooming House, and Witter Place funding as major accomplishments for the fiscal year.

The public comment period for the CAPER is open until September 22. Comments can be submitted via email, postal mail, or as part of the public hearing during this meeting.

Chair Sean Zielenbach opened the public hearing. Helen McIlvaine noted that the comments and questions during the presentation can be added to the public hearing.

One member asked for clarification on how income translates to AMI. Mx. Cadena stated that extremely low-income is 30% AMI. Another member asked if there was a way to increase the effectiveness of programs to meet goals. Mx. Cadena responded that the switch to rental rehabilitation from home rehabilitation was intended to address the decline in demand for home rehabilitation projects. There have also been delays due to a lack of architects. For other programs, the Office of Housing could do better marketing for programs and possibly shift funding around.

One member asked if not meeting goals would hurt funding in the future. Mx. Cadena replied that it does not. HUD uses these numbers to understand and make reports. Funding for CDBG and HOME are formula-based, not performance-based. Funding is affected by how much Congress allocates in the federal budget.

Ms. McIlvaine noted that programs are adjusted to better serve the community. For example, energy efficiency was added as a component for home rehabilitation. For households who are eligible for home rehabilitation, it is a dramatic and impactful program, even though the number of households who use it are shrinking. RAMP was changed from a grant to being managed by Housing staff for better implementation. The Office of Housing will look at how to use more money efficiently during the budget process and the Housing 2040 Master Plan. Ms. McIlvaine noted that overall, federal funding has decreased dramatically.

One member asked if the Office of Housing has worked with Habitat for Humanity. Mx. Cadena responded that they have worked closely with Rebuilding Together. The Office of Housing works with Rebuilding Together for different HUD grants and handles environmental reviews for them.

The public hearing was closed by the Chair.

#### **4. Funding Update on CLI Elbert Ave Project (Helen McIlvaine)**

Helen McIlvaine reported that the CLI Elbert Avenue project received state Housing Opportunity Tax Credit (HOTC) funding. They are now able to move forward with the project after having recently been approved to receive \$3 million in City gap funding and \$1 million in REACH funding from Virginia Housing. Ms. McIlvaine applauded the effort of AHAAC and its advocacy with City Council during the budget process.

#### **5. Housing 2040 Master Plan Update (Tamara Jovovic)**

Tamara Jovovic provided an update on the Housing 2040 Master Plan. Postcards were mailed to every residential and commercial address in the City to advertise the two-part kickoff meeting. The first is a virtual kickoff on September 18 focused on data from the Housing Needs Analysis, and the second is in-person at Charles Houston Recreation Center on September 25 focused on the principles, priorities, and overview of the plan.

One member asked if the plan will focus on zoning changes. Ms. Jovovic responded that it is not a land use plan. The first meeting will focus on demographics and data regarding housing need.

One member asked if there are other ways to engage if one cannot attend the kickoff meetings. Ms. Jovovic explained that there will be multiple ways to engage beyond the kickoff meetings, including a public comment form, 'What's Your Housing Story?' engagements, and pop-up listening sessions.

One member asked to what degree will people who are most vulnerable be able to access the meetings, including older populations and lower income communities. Ms. Jovovic responded that the Office of Housing is diversifying where staff conduct outreach and are partnering with local groups, including ALIVE food hubs, Senior Services of Alexandria, libraries, and other locations.

One member asked if the kickoffs will discuss what was accomplished under the current Housing Master Plan. Ms. Jovovic replied that the current plan's scorecard will be shared at the kickoff.

Another member asked if the Office of Housing is coordinating with ARHA. Ms. Jovovic responded that flyers were dropped off to ARHA and coordination with staff is ongoing.

Another member suggested attending public markets.

## **6. AlexWest Small Area Plan Update (Tamara Jovovic)**

Ms. Jovovic explained that the Planning Commission voted to defer the AWSAP and directed staff to continue to work on several topics, including: specific allocations for density and height along the West End Transitway, small business preservation, the proposed new recreation center, affordable housing, and a comparison of the BSAP and AWSAP requirements. The current timeline is to bring back the small area plan in November. Ms. Jovovic noted that AHAAC had sent in a comment letter and Shelley spoke on behalf of the Committee.

One member asked about the pushback regarding parking minimums. Ms. Jovovic explained that the plan focused redevelopment on underutilized lots and parking lots, which raised concerns at the Planning Commission public hearing about caps on FAR and building on lots without additional density to compensate for lost parking. Ms. McIlvaine noted that other landowners are considering redevelopment.

## **7. FY25 Legislative Agenda (Helen McIlvaine)**

Ms. McIlvaine presented information about the FY25 Legislative Priorities process. Ms. McIlvaine explained the City's process and how housing related bills can be presented to the General Assembly.

Ms. McIlvaine presented multiple legislative proposals related to AHAAC's mission that had been suggested by AHAAC members and staff who are involved in the legislative process.

The Committee discussed inclusionary zoning and the benefits of obtaining units rather

than monetary contributions, especially with changing costs of development. The Committee also discussed the Faith-in-Housing proposal, which faith groups are advocating for to allow for more streamlined and expedited development review.

One member asked if rent control had been vetted through partners. Ms. Jovovic noted that the City's nonprofit partners adhere to the City's voluntary rent increase policy.

One member asked about conversations with property management companies, who might oppose tenant protections. Sarah Taylor, the City's former Legislative Director, organized meetings with property management groups as the legislative liaison.

One member advocated for increased funding for the state housing tax credit program, known as the Housing Opportunities Tax Credit. They noted the large demand from projects, many of which were not funded in this application cycle.

The Committee will coordinate to send a letter from AHAAC with its priorities, with staff assistance.

#### **8. Consideration of AHAAC's FY 2024 Annual Report (Chris Do)**

Chris Do presented the FY24 AHAAC Annual Report, highlighting that it is a summary and compilation of the meeting minutes from last fiscal year. Jan Macidull motioned to approve the report, Michelle Krocker seconded. The Committee voted to unanimously approve the annual report.

#### **9. Consideration of June 6, 2024 Minutes (Chris Do)**

Chair Zielenbach asked if there were any corrections to the June minutes. Betsy Faga motioned to approve the June 6, 2024 minutes. Michelle Krocker seconded. The Committee voted to unanimously approve the minutes; Peter Sutherland and Coss Lumbé abstained.

#### **10. ARHA Updates (Michelle Krocker)**

Michelle Krocker provided an update on ARHA. The new CEO has started. He will be introduced to City Council in October. The ARHA annual report is now available for review.

#### **12. Housing Alexandria Updates (staff)**

Jon Frederick was absent. Ms. Jovovic announced that all AHAAC members are welcome at the Housing Alexandria 20th anniversary event for free.

#### **12. Information Item: Housing Master Plan Progress Report (Tamara Jovovic)**

Tamara Jovovic presented the FY24 Housing Master Plan Progress Report. One member asked if staff can present this information in a digital dashboard format, similar to

Arlington's. Ms. Jovovic noted that some information is captured in OPA's dashboard, but staff will transition to a new format with the Housing 2040 plan.

### **13. Information Item: Financial Report**

Helen McIlvaine presented the financial report. The meals tax revenue has grown to approximately \$7 million per year.

One member asked if affordable housing could ask for a higher percentage of the meals tax. Staff responded that the revenue is already allocated, so an increased allocation would be taking from another fund. The Committee also discussed other funding ideas for affordable housing, including a boat tax and data center revenue.

One member asked if Amazon's new tranche of funding could go towards any affordable housing project. Staff noted that ParcView II and Naja could be of interest to Amazon.

### **14. Staff Updates (Staff)**

Tamara Jovovic provided staff updates. Michael Jackson and Robyn Konkel are leaving the Committee at the end of September. Staff thanked them for their service to AHAAC.

Ms. Jovovic announced that Kenny Turscak will be moving to Planning and Zoning but may be staying with AHAAC in a position for Planning and Zoning. Ms. Jovovic and Ms. McIlvaine thanked him for his work with AHAAC.

The next AHAAC meeting will be on Monday, October 7.

### **15. Announcements and Upcoming Meetings**

#### [Housing 2040 Master Plan Kickoff Meeting #1](#)

Wednesday, September 18, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Virtual

#### [ARHA Draft 2025-2029 Five-Year Plan and Draft 2025 Annual Agency Plan Public Hearings](#)

September 11 and September 18: 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

401 Wythe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

#### [ARHA Redevelopment Work Group Meeting](#)

Thursday, September 19, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Council Work Room, City Hall, 301 King St.

#### [Housing 2040 Master Plan Kickoff Meeting #2](#)

Wednesday, September 25, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St.

Housing Alexandria Fall Festival

September 26; 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Garden Alexandria, 5380 Eisenhower Avenue

**16. Adjournment (Chair)**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm.