



Holly Bray, Chair

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON HOUSING

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June 19, 2017

Hon. Jay Fiset, Chairman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Joint Facilities Advisory Commission  
Carlin Springs and Buck Properties

Dear Mr. Fiset:

At its June 8, 2017 public hearing, the Citizens Advisory Commission on Housing heard a report on the work that the Joint Facilities Advisory Commission (“JFAC”) is doing to analyze the County’s decisions with respect to the Buck Property and the Virginia Hospital Center’s properties on Carlin Springs Road, near the current Hospital Center, and along Lee Highway.

The Affordable Housing Master Plan (“AHMP”), which was adopted in September 2015, states that it shall be the policy of Arlington County to integrate affordable housing goals and policies into County sector plans, economic development strategies, the Master Transportation Plan and other County planning efforts. The plan goes on to state that “by integrating affordable housing and other planning efforts, Arlington can build a more sustainable community and local economy.” (AHMP Objective 3.5)

The Housing Commission advises the County Board that the Carlin Springs and Buck Properties are prime candidates to be included in the discussion of integrating affordable housing goals with the County’s planning efforts. We recommend that: a) the land swaps lead to land specifically set aside for affordable housing; or b) any funds generated by land swaps be immediately allocated to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (“AHIF”).

The Commission advises the County Board to take one of these two actions for affordable housing for several reasons. First, as previously cited it is consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the Affordable Housing Master Plan. The needs considered in conjunction with the Buck and Virginia Hospital Center properties include schools, parks, transportation, and public safety, each of which are genuine needs that are important to Arlington’s long-term growth however, affordable housing is equally important to Arlington’s long-term growth. Similarly, the scenarios for the two properties list parks as a critical need and yet we can all agree that affordable

housing is also a critical need. We believe that it is an oversight that affordable housing is not listed as a need. We request that the County Board correct this oversight and include affordable housing in this discussion in accordance with the values of the community as laid out in the AHMP.

Second, one of our affordable housing goals is geographic diversity of affordable housing. The swap sites are located in areas that do not have an abundance of committed affordable units. Setting aside land for affordable housing in these areas is smart housing policy. In fact, many of Virginia Hospital Center's employees are rent burdened and would qualify to live in committed affordable units in these areas close to their employment.

Third, we recently implemented a Notice of Funding Availability ("NOFA") for our AHIF funds. The results were telling. We received five applications that represent over \$56 million in financial requests. We were only able to commit to one transaction because of lack of funding. It is anticipated that there may be approximately \$2 million in funds generated with a land swap. Should you decide to not designate the sites for affordable housing the surplus funds could still be used to support affordable housing in Arlington by being allocated to AHIF.

The Commission vote on the motion to include affordable housing on these properties was unanimous. Members in favor are Mr. Berkey, Mr. Blank, Mr. Borthwick, Ms. Bray, Mr. de Ferranti, Ms. Desai-Seltzer, Ms. Gee, Ms. Hogan, and Mr. Withers.

Each of you speak personally and eloquently about the need for affordable housing. We ask you to use this opportunity to live out those values in a targeted way that reflects sound fiscal stewardship, along with the County's clearly expressed need for land to address the infrastructure needs that both you and JFAC have identified.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Holly Bray  
Chair

CC: JFAC