



**City of Falls Church
Housing Commission
MINUTES**

PURPOSE OF MEETING: The five-member Commission is appointed by the City Council for three year terms. The Housing Commission maintains awareness of housing needs and opportunities, including affordable housing; proposes housing policy initiatives and changes; investigates fair housing complaints and conciliates these complaints; mediates conflicts relating to the Virginia Residential Landlord & Tenant Act and offers reconciliatory services in conflicts relating to other housing laws.

DATE OF MEETING: June 28, 2022

PLACE OF MEETING: In Person (Laurel Room) & Virtual

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY: Joshua Shokoor at **6:31 p.m.**

THOSE PRESENT:

Commission Members	Planning Commission Liaison
Hannah Jordan	City Council
Joshua Shokoor, Chair	Letty Hardi
Staff	Guests
Dana Lewis	Jordan Hicks
Kayleen Mark	Mansur Abdul-Malik (virtual)
Ethan Puc	Gabrielle Hapi (virtual)
	Derek Hyra
	Gene Gresko (virtual)

Approval of Minutes - Chair Shokoer

Minutes from the **May 10, 2022** meeting were approved.

Housing Intern UPDATE – Staff Lewis

- HHS recently added Ethan Puc as an intern to assist with workload in department.

Amazon 2 Homeownership Program UPDATE – Staff Lewis

- This was not approved on 6/27 because several attachments were still being worked on, including the covenant (being drafted by city attorney), sales contract (based off VA realtors), developer agreement, and quarterly reporting. Lawyers are going over the attachments with July 11th as the new date for approval with Council. There was a reduction in development fees from 12% to 9.5%.
- City approval is required for acquisition, and with the current state of real estate market this requires an effective/efficient mechanism for approval to ensure properties can be acquired
 - Currently a short narrative of property is provided and the city has five days to approve/deny (city approval is through Wyatt then Dana)
- VA Housing set the purchase limit at \$550,000 for properties, the City will add on an additional \$170,000 for a maximum of \$720,000 (pending VA Housing approval)
 - Limit currently set is not sufficient for current city housing prices
- It is currently not feasible to work with realtors with the open market and current prices. It will be important to work with realtors to acquire properties before they enter open market
- Dana asked about possibility of tax benefits (capital gains tax breaks) in selling to a non-profit. Mansur will explore and get back to committee
- Derek asked about rehab costs and where financing will come from after the purchase:
 - Once city approves, funds will be requisitioned for contractors
 - \$20,000 cap on rehab, city has final say in rehabs and can pull plug
 - Given the cap, will only buy properties that are livable, that only need 1 major system replaced (such as a roof) or 2-3 smaller systems
- Although it is a long process, it is worth the weight as this program is the first of its kind in VA and VA Housing is watching closely, can potentially be model for similar future programs

Amazon 3 Acquisition Strike Fund Update – Staff Lewis

- City wanted to work through an LLC, but not necessary since process is going through non-profit
- Eight firms have declined the project, citing that it is too small and not feasible
- Now that 208 Gibson has been successfully transferred, all five may be transferred as a package to Wesley Housing
- 310 S. Maple has been sitting vacant, currently only subsidizing rent for 1 resident
 - Community Housing Partners looking at rehab for 4 properties
- Wesley will take all responsibility and care of properties and will be proactive in reaching out to property owners for purchase

- Housing Commission needs copy of Wesley Housing agreement to be aware of properties
- Community input on project is necessary (broad group weighing in)
- Gene asked who owned the adjacent properties. City has records of property owners and is aware.
- Derek commented that this entire process would be far easier and cheaper if Falls Church had a Housing Authority which had the institutions to streamline process
 - Allows for better allocation of funding (more straightforward for the public i.e. X amount of housing for X price)

Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Update – Staff Kayleen Mark

- Kayleen and Ethan attended the Chamber of Commerce Mixer to spread the word to business owners about the ADU program. Many are not aware of the program.
- 27 total ADUs, 6 available, 1 in the process of filling
- Founder’s Row is waiting on certificate of occupancy, Northgate and Pearson are filled
 - Kayleen expressed that properties currently are only inspected by the property management company once a month, which is not sufficient.
- Hannah asked how more housing can be provided to the homeless population. Kayleen works through Bailey’s Crossroads shelter; however, many do not have jobs/income to qualify for ADUs. Fairfax County provides housing vouchers for homeless population.
- Hannah mentioned the Housing First program which provides a dwelling to a homeless person and the possibility of doing a similar version of this with smaller studios (micro units) where more people can be housed at a lower price (smaller version of Housing First).
- Welcoming Falls Church is meeting next on July 6th, and is encouraging people to join mentor teams to help house families. The goal is to have 1-2 refugee families move-in during the fall.

Housing Commission Membership & recruitment – Chair Shokoor

- This is Joshua’s second to last meeting as he is moving to the Netherlands in August, with Kristina leaving as well it leaves 2 vacancies on the Commission
- Need to post flyers/ads in government buildings and residence buildings to find new commission members
 - .Need diversity of viewpoints, bring in residents of ADUs
- Confirmed next meeting for July 19th and farewell for Josh afterwards

Other

- Dana is still looking for Housing Development Specialist;

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned – 7:52

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