

Board Matters

October 20, 2022

North Hill Project located on Richmond Highway, Mount Vernon District

Commissioner Lardner congratulated staff for their hard work, perseverance and breaking the glass ceiling with creating the extraordinary work with the North Hill project. However, Commissioner Lardner expressed the need for the Commissioners and Members of the Board to go to the property to see the quality and finish of the space, as well as, experience the success of the North Hill development.

Commissioner Lardner noted that achievement award applications that acknowledge innovative county government projects are underway. The North Hill project could be recognized for its architectural design, site planning, collaboration, and making new deals that are non-traditional.

Commissioner Lardner further commented that North Hill is an example of how maximizing the return on investment through public-private partnerships, can create, affordable housing that is high quality with amazing design, while creating livable, communities with a mix of housing for all incomes and ages.

Chairman McKenna agreed that it is important for the Commissioners and Board members to experience the North Hill Property and a way to begin this experience can be through a video with the possibility of uploading onto Channel 16. The video should capture the essence of the property so that others can see and experience this extraordinary work.

Commissioner Kennedy provided positive feedback and noted that Lake Anne, a senior housing project, as well as the Government Center are also examples of projects that were well done.

Workforce Dwelling Unit, or the Work Force Dwelling Unit Program

Chairman McKenna stated that the Workforce Dwelling Unit, or WDU, program has been in place for several years and recently the FCRHA was made aware of an unusual situation that creates challenges for the administration of the WDU Program.

Given the price points of the units, the WDU Program does not require that purchasers are first time homebuyers, only that any home they own is sold prior to the purchase of an WDU. This policy does not mirror other homeownership programs, including the Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Program.

Practically, it creates a challenge in that currently households can own a home and apply for a WDU; the purchase of the WDU would then have to be contingent on the sale of their current property. This adds risk to both transactions and creates an administrative challenge in aligning the closings. It is particularly challenging if the

current and prospective homes are under the WDU programs, putting the FCRHA in the center of the transaction practically and financially.

Chairman McKenna moved that the current WDU Program policy adopted by the FCRHA on December 5, 2018, be revised to require current homeowners to divest their interest in any other real property prior to completing an application for a WDU.

Current Language: “Current homeowners will be required to sell their home before purchasing a WDU as their domicile.

New Language: “Prospective applicants may not have an ownership interest in real property when submitting an application to purchase a WDU, nor when closing on the purchase of a WDU.”

This change is meant to reduce risk to the FCRHA; simplify the administration of the WDU program; and better manage the expectations of program participants and prospective program participants.

Chairman McKenna further moved that HCD staff more comprehensively review this issue and other challenges with the WDU program that we have seen and that have been raised by Supervisor Foust in his Board Matter from October 11, 2022.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Stanton.

During discussion of the proposed motion, Commissioner Solomon recommended that considering the establishment of a task force that will review the program, if a time-period of one year, can be added to the motion. Once the year expires, the language will revert to the original wording. The modified language will be in place until October 20, 2023, which allows time for the task force to complete their review process.

Chairman McKenna amended her motion to include the one-year expiration. Vice Chair, Stanton seconded the amended motion.

Current Language: “Current homeowners will be required to sell their home before purchasing a WDU as their domicile.

New Language: “Prospective applicants may not have an ownership interest in real property when submitting an application to purchase a WDU, nor when closing on the purchase of a WDU. This language will remain effective until October 2023.

Commissioners Kennedy and Feng abstained. The motion passed.

Commissioner Solomon requested that notification be sent to all Commissioners sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of the amended language.

Congratulations to Amy Ginger, Deputy Director of Operations as a recipient of the 2022 A. Heath Onthank Award

Chairman McKenna recognized Amy Ginger, as a recipient of the 2022 A. Heath Onthank Award for her contributions and work on the One University Project. Amy Ginger, led the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority's federal policy interactions, persuading HUD to do business differently, facilitating approval of the trailblazing, first-of-its-kind One University redevelopment which will provide 240 new affordable housing units for extremely low and low-income families and seniors. Chairman McKenna acknowledged and thanked Amy Ginger for her tremendous skill, knowledge, and thoughtful commitment to public service.

Regional Process to Develop an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice: HCD Director, Tom Fleetwood, informed the Commissioners of the following:

- The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) is a five-year plan providing an overview of fair housing in Fairfax County. The plan provides a comprehensive analysis of fair housing laws, regulations, and practices in the private and public sectors.
- The purpose of the AI is to identify meaningful actions that local governments and public housing authorities can take to reverse historic patterns of discrimination and promote fair housing.
- As a recipient of federal funding from HUD, jurisdictions must affirmatively further fair housing and complete a five-year AI. Historically, Fairfax County has developed the AI specific to our local jurisdiction.
- In 2017, the county entered a Memorandum of Understanding with neighboring jurisdictions to develop a Regional Analysis of Impediments (RAI), led by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). The FCRHA entered into this agreement along with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.
- When completed, the RAI will be a five-year plan that includes goals and strategies specific to Fairfax County as well as to the region that will further fair housing.
- A draft of the RAI will be made available for public comment, anticipated to be released in early to mid-November. After the public comment period, staff will bring the RAI to the FCRHA for acceptance, most likely at the beginning of the new year. The BOS will be asked to accept the RAI as well.

HCD Director, Fleetwood, confirmed this is coming out and a link will be forwarded to the Commissioners to keep them apprised of upcoming information. Tom Fleetwood, HCD Director, stated that there is an expectation that the County will go through a rigorous public engagement process, which will produce a good product at the end.