

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Letter 2

Leckey Forum 2

Tenant Profile 3

APAH Sponsors
Tutoring, Seminars 4

Roundup 6

APAH Only Non-Profit Developer Selected to Affordable Housing Roundtable

Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing is working closely with a group of developers, businesses, community activists, and county officials to come to an agreement that would preserve affordable housing units and give developers increased density to expand the size of their projects. Formed May 7, the 23-member Affordable Housing Roundtable is expected to present its recommendations to the Arlington County Board this fall.

"APAH was the only nonprofit developer asked to be a participant in the Roundtable on Affordable Housing," says APAH's Executive Director Douglas Peterson. "We were flattered to be chosen to take part in such a difficult and emotionally charged process. County officials should be congratulated for their brave efforts in working with all interested parties.

"The County has always been gracious with federal funds and local dollars allotted toward affordable housing," he adds. "But the market has shifted so dramatically that we'll need to have \$15 to \$20 million annually to keep up with the need."

The Roundtable was formed by County Board Chairman Jay Fiset in the wake of a December 2004 court ruling, in which Circuit Court Judge Joanne Alper rejected the County's new policy regarding housing contributions from developers in exchange for higher density on their projects. She argued that the new "guidelines" were not voluntary.

in the news

Arlington County Exceeds Affordable Housing Targets—But Concerns Looms Over Future

Arlington County released its first *Annual Affordable Housing Targets Report* on June 1, 2005, detailing the county's progress toward its affordable housing goals during fiscal years 2003 and 2004. The county's average annual increase (444) in Committed Affordable Units exceeded its target of 400, and showed significant progress toward the county's fair housing goals.

"The county exceeded its target for the first time in a long time," says Douglas Peterson, APAH's Executive Director. "We are not expecting that to happen again anytime soon. The county has always been gracious with its support of affordable housing. But the market has shifted so dramatically. You need to have a constant funding source." The county, he says, is looking at fund raising options.

The report also showed that the percentage of affordable housing units and subsidies for persons with disabilities has also increased because of new funding resources dedicated to serving people with special needs. But targets for serving households with incomes below 40 percent of median income and for moving homeless people into permanent housing fell short of the goal.

Redeveloping Existing Properties Best Way to Go, County Official Says

The best way to increase affordable housing is to keep reasonably priced apartments from being converted into high-rent condos—and build additional units on the property, according to County Board Chairman Jay Fiset. The County will create a "swat team" to keep track of buildings at risk and monitor them, alerting nonprofit developers when the property goes on sale.

"The increasing emphasis is on preservation and renovation of existing garden apartments," says Fiset. "Every square foot of property in Arlington is at risk of becoming unaffordable. We need nonprofit organizations like APAH to preserve some of the units at greatest risk of being lost. Some for profit developers are happy to build moderate cost housing if they can make the numbers work. But by and large, we count on nonprofits for provision of moderate cost housing."

APAH's Executive Director Douglas Peterson agrees with Fiset's approach to preserving affordable housing, focusing its efforts on building more units to current properties. "We own enough properties," he explains, "that we can keep busy for the next five years doing expansions, demolitions and new construction. We're in a good position because everything we own has high zoning on it."

We need nonprofit organizations like APAH to preserve some of the units at greatest risk of being lost.

Katrina, and now Rita, has left thousands of people without homes. Low and moderate-income survivors displaced by the two hurricanes are looking everywhere for reasonably priced rentals so they can settle into a new home and begin recovering from America's worst natural disasters. But the severe affordable housing shortage in major cities is hampering their efforts to start anew, and dampening their hopes for the future.

Hurricane victims are facing dismal choices—choices APAH residents understand only too well. They can move further out into suburbs where housing is cheaper but job opportunities are fewer, or move into expensive high-rise apartments with hopes that they'll make enough money to cover rents.

The hurling winds that wiped out entire towns underscore a national crisis: The shortage of affordable housing.

The need for affordable housing is now stronger than ever. APAH is committed to preserving reasonably priced rentals in Arlington county to ensure low- and moderate-income residents can afford to stay in their communities. APAH owns nearly 400

affordable apartments and rents them out to teachers, firefighters, clerks, service workers and other residents.

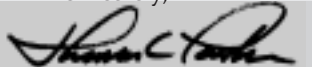
Over the next five years, APAH plans to nearly triple its existing base of affordable rental units by expanding apartment buildings, constructing townhouses adjacent to its properties, and redeveloping garden apartments into high-risers. But the need for affordable housing is much greater than the supply and Arlington continues to lose affordable units through redevelopment and conversions at an alarming rate. APAH continues to work with county officials, developers and other business leaders to provide incentives for developing affordable housing.

Images of devastation in hurricane-ravaged areas still haunts many of us. A woman who refused to leave her house hangs on to the porch door to avoid being swept away by strong currents. A man carrying a child on his back holds up a box full of his most precious belonging knowing he will never return. Families crowded in makeshift rafts float downstream to wherever the waters lead.

In a moment's time, at the blink of an eye, we too could lose everything.

As a compassionate nation, we must provide affordable housing to our residents and to those who come to us because they have nothing left. Tragedies often bring out the best in each of us. Please join me in commending advocates and supporters like you, as well as APAH's staff and board members for their efforts in contributing to hurricane relief funds and for reaching out to those in need of housing throughout the year.

Sincerely,



Tom Parker

Leckey Housing Forum, Best Practices Advocates Offer Tips On Solving Affordable Housing Crisis

Building affordable housing on “free or cheap” land is one way to approach solving the housing crisis, which is forcing people who can't pay the high rents to move further out into the suburbs, according to participants of the Leckey Forum, held last fall at George Mason University. “San Francisco is building affordable housing above a fire station,” says Jack Cornman, a principal with Consultants on Purpose who attended the forum.

“Other cities are considering building affordable housing on school property or church land.”

At the Forum, sponsored by the Alliance for Housing Solutions (AHS), community leaders gathered to talk about ways to educate the public about affordable housing, promote “best practices” from around the country and bring together county leaders and affordable housing organizations.

The last issue of *Homeward* featured tips on educating the public about the problem. This article highlights suggestions made by Forum participants on what can be done at the state and local levels to increase the supply of affordable housing. Advocates should consider pursuing the following ideas:

- Support the Virginia Commonwealth Housing Fund.
- Strengthen Arlington County's authority to set guidelines/requirements for affordable housing.
- Provide incentives to developers for building affordable housing.
- Secure a dedicated stream of revenue for affordable housing.
- Investigate how “the right of first refusal” on sales of affordable housing works in DC and Maryland and determine how such a right might be crafted for Virginia.
- Seek greater authority to set guidelines and rules requiring affordable housing in new and rehab projects.

tenant profile

Get Involved!

We hope you'll consider donating your time, talents and contacts. We can use your help in everything—from stuffing envelopes to forwarding announcements about APAH news and upcoming events. Business, church, community and school groups are welcome—we'll find a rewarding team project to suit your interests and time.

Please contact us at 703-276-2657.

Cameron Commons New Home to Salvadorian Immigrant

An employee at Giant Food Store on Lee Highway, Maria Sorto greets hundreds of customers every day, welcoming them into one of the nation's largest supermarket chains. An immigrant from El Salvador, Sorto believes in the "American Dream"—that anything is possible if you work hard, and have faith.

She moved to this country with three of her five children so they could all make the best out of their lives.

What didn't factor into her vision of the American Dream was the price of housing in Arlington, a hot market boiling over with luxury condos, high-price rentals and exclusive communities. She finally found an affordable 2-bedroom apartment in north Arlington. But the place felt cramped. The three kids clamored for more space. When her two other children moved in with them on July 2004, the place was clearly overcrowded.

The five Sorto siblings rubbed elbows for three months in standing-room-only space. The apartment was bursting at the seams. Three months later, on October 2004, Sorto learned that her apartment building was going to be

converted into a condo. The condo fees, she assumed, would be outrageous. She had to move. She took a deep breath, braced herself and began a search for a three-bedroom apartment in Arlington.

At work, one of her customers, an employee of Paradigm Management, told her about the new 3-bedroom units under construction at Cameron Commons, a property owned by APAH. Sorto's eyes widened, her face radiated. On January 2005, she filled out an application and waited. The following month, she got word. She was in. She packed up her belongings, loaded up the truck, and led her flock into one of the apartments.

The rooms in Cameron Commons feel large and airy, but living on the second floor took some getting used to. "I have always lived on the first floor," she said. "But since we have been living here we have been very happy."

Cameron Commons is a long way from El Salvador. But the three-bedroom apartment is Sorto's home away from home—and offers the security and stability necessary for her children to flourish in this country.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

To learn more about APAH

Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing
703-276-2657 www.apah.org

For information on renting or maintenance of an APAH property

Paradigm Management Co. 703-528-8151 or 703-528-7200

Housing Assistance

Housing Grants	703-228-1350
Housing Services — Section 8	703-228-1450
Emergency Winter Shelter	703-228-3935
Homeless Services	703-228-1350
Home Ownership Assistance (AHOME)	703-527-3854
Clothing/Household Items	703-548-4227
Fuel and Energy/Utility Assistance	703-558-0035

General Information

Arlington County Information and Referral	703-228-3000
TTY Hearing Impaired	703-228-4611
Arlington United Way	703-522-0606
Arlington Public Schools	703-228-6000

For Emergencies

Fire, Police, Ambulance	911
For non-emergencies	703-558-2222

did you know?

The third annual National Housing Opportunity Pulse survey, sponsored by the National Association of Realtors, found the following:

- People want teachers and firefighters to live in the communities where they work;
- Eight out of 10 survey respondents said affordable housing is a big problem;
- Affordable housing was ranked the second biggest problem—more so than job layoffs and unemployment, terrorism, crime and environmental pollution. Affordable health care options ranked the number one problem;
- 70 percent of the respondents would support building more affordable housing if their tax dollars were better used to enhance for public services.

APAH Sponsors ESL Tutoring, Homeowners Seminars, Financial Workshops

Learning to speak English is a top priority among APAH residents. APAH has formed a partnership with the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia to recruit tutors who would provide one-on-one ESL tutoring to residents. “We have so many residents eager to learn English,” says APAH Resident Services Manager Virginia Patton. “Many of them had good jobs in their home country and want better jobs here.”

One resident, for instance, was an economist in his country. “He is educated and ambitious.”

Nearly 60 percent of APAH’s residents are Spanish-speaking. Patton hopes to enroll 100 to 150 residents in the tutoring program. “We can have tutors meet students at the library, Starbuck’s, or places near their home,” she says. Patton, who is undergoing training to become a tutor herself, will match the tutor with a student to make sure the relationship works.

To respond, APAH has offered the following:

- Financial education seminar with Citibank—given in English and Spanish—to teach residents how to make direct deposits, open up an account and do online banking.
- Homeownership session at which a First Horizons Home Loans representative described how to obtain a mortgage, and a Casa America realtor outlined what’s involved with buying a home.



Young residents of Cameron Common Apartments create bookplates with help of Arlington college students at kick-off party for APAH’s free book distribution program.

- Developed a partnership with “Computers 4 Students,” a company that refurbishes donated and surplus computers with updated software, so that residents could have access to the Internet.
- Distributed over 100 new books to residents of all ages.
- Held a picnic and field day for children.

What’s next? Patton would like to set up a college prep program for APAH high school residents. “I’d like to take kids to the different college campuses so they could see what they look like,” she says. “We could then talk about the SATs, college applications and what they need to do to apply.”

Clean Out Your Closets and Help APAH

APAH and **MissionFish/eBay** have joined forces to bring our supporters a unique way to help create more affordable housing in Arlington. Now you can sell an item on eBay and donate from 10 to 100 percent of the net proceeds to benefit APAH.

You can sell practically anything on eBay. So, clean out that closet or garage or attic and turn your extra stuff into the stuff of dreams of affordable housing for teachers, first responders, waiters, childcare workers and others who can rarely afford to live in Arlington. Your donation is tax-deductible and you’ll get that great feeling that comes with knowing you’re playing an important part in the affordable housing solution.

This fun, new way to help create affordable housing in Arlington in only a click away! To get started today, go to www.apah.org/donate.



APAH Helps Residents Relocate While Awaiting Redevelopment

APAH’s redevelopment of Rosslyn Ridge and expansion of Fisher House will benefit the community by creating additional affordable housing. Residents living in those apartments will be temporarily relocated until the construction is finished. “I met with residents in each of the apartments last March and April to talk about the relocation and their concerns,” says Virginia Patton, Resident Services Program manager.

“I will then meet with residents again to develop individual relocation plans,” she says. “We want to give priority to residents with kids enrolled in schools, to keep them in those school districts.”

APAH will pay residents’ moving expenses and related utilities costs based on Arlington County’s relocation guidelines, which offer up to \$900 to residents moving out of one-bedroom apartments, and up to \$1,050 to those relocating from a two-bedroom apartment.

The APAH Resident Services Program would like to thank its sponsors:

Books for America
United DC Soccer Team – Kicks for Kids Program
Harris Teeter – Harrison Street, Arlington
Safeway- Lee Highway, Arlington
Giant Food Stores – Washington Boulevard and Lee Highway, Arlington
Monica Harsley of the Virginia Cooperative Extension for her presentation on nutrition to the residents of Leckey Gardens

And its volunteers:

Andrea Alegret
Matthew Brooks
Carolyn Forte
Ever Flores
Elizabeth Latusek
Brigid Leahy
Jessie Malloy
Ellen Patton
Fran Patton
Jonathon Solis
Ruth Back

thank you notes

The following individuals have generously contributed to APAH between March 2005 and September 2005.

Marsha N. Allgeier
Anonymous (B)
Ashton Heights Civic Association
Miriam Balutis
Thomas R. Bender
Harlow & Charlene N. Bickford
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Jeannette Y. Wick
Douglas L. & Jeanne M Williams
William Wooten & Ingrid Jobst-Wooten
Ann Yarborough
Chris & Mary Beth Zimmerman
Janet Zipser

The following organizations have generously contributed to APAH's Fund-Raising Campaign between March 2005 and September 2005 either by matching an employee's contribution or by awarding an operating grant directly to APAH:

Arlington Young Democrats
Church of the Covenant
Ellen P. Richards Revocable Trust
Enterprise Social Investment Corporation
Fannie Mae Foundation
The Chestnut Revocable Trust
United Way/CFC

SAVE THE DATE!
**APAH's Annual
Holiday Party~~~
Wednesday,
December 14, 2005
4 to 7 p.m.
at APAH's Office!**

DESIGNATE APAH #8403

Charity Begins at Home...and in the Office

If your employer participates in another campaign or you are retired, simply write "**Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing**" in the space provided on the pledge card to designate your pledge and include our address: 2704 North Pershing Drive, Arlington, VA 22201.

APAH has speakers available to visit your business or community organization. Please call Jean Falvey at (703) 465-0725 to make arrangements. We thank you in advance for your consideration and generosity.



APAH Now Accepts Donations Online

As a new member of **TouchDC**, APAH is now able to accept credit card donations online. Your donation is safe, secure and private. To donate to APAH, go to www.TouchDC.org or to the Donate Page on www.apah.org and click the Network for Good button to be linked directly to APAH's account page.



Happenings at APAH's Properties

Fisher Houses

Fisher Houses received a tax credit under a federal program administered by Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), to undertake the renovation of 33 units spread across four buildings. Each building will be renovated one at a time. Sixteen one-bedroom apartments will be converted into two-bedrooms, and the rest of the one bedrooms will be expanded.

Leckey Gardens

The property is operating at full capacity, and got high marks for maintenance and operations from VHDA, which inspected the building last month.

Rosslyn Ridge Redevelopment

APAH will redevelop Rosslyn Ridge from a 22-apartment building into a 228-apartment complex, with 95 units reserved for low and median income people. Six of the affordable housing units will serve extremely low-income families. Construction is slated to begin in February.

Cameron Commons

Renovation is complete and all the apartments are fully leased. Out of the 16 units, six are three-bedrooms, including an accessible apartment. The rest of the units were extensively renovated.

Columbia Grove

APAH may be constructing five additional apartments in Columbia Grove's grounds to be used as "transitional housing." APAH will own the apartments and lease them to an organization providing social services to tenants.

Calvert Manor

Like other APAH properties, Calvert Manor's 33 apartments are occupied. VHDA conducted its annual inspection and found the building to be in excellent condition.


Third Annual Leckey Forum on Affordable Housing to Be Held December

The Alliance for Housing Solutions will hold its 3rd Annual Thomas P. Leckey Forum on Affordable Housing, December 3, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., at George Mason University, Arlington Campus. Tools for Saving Affordable Housing will give participants a chance to examine the affordable housing crisis from different perspectives. One panel will look at the economic factors at play when affordable housing is sold to for profit developers. Another panel will look at what can be done at the local, state and federal level to manage the affordable housing crisis. For more information contact Julie Anderson at (703) 237-0283.

homeward

Homeward is a periodic publication of the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc. (APAH), a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) housing sponsor operating in Arlington County to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income people. For additional information about APAH and our housing program, call (703) 276-2657, send e-mail to apah@cavtel.net, or visit our web site at www.apah.org.

- Tom ParkerPresident
- Douglas PetersonExecutive Director
- Helen McIlvaineDirector of Development
- Steve LoeChief Financial Officer
- Judy YoderDirector of Operations
- Virginia PattonResident Services Coordinator
- Marcela KoganContributing Writer

 APAH, Inc.
2704 North Pershing Drive
Arlington, VA 22201



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2704 North Pershing Drive
Arlington, VA 22201
703-276-2657
fax 703-276-0805
email: apah@cavtel.net
web site: www.apah.org



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