

LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONS BOARD
Wednesday, January 5, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
ZOOM CALL

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Elliott Waters at 7:05PM.

B. Chairman Waters made the following required announcement:

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic emergency, the January 6, 2022, meeting of the Landlord Tenant Relations Board is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2020 or Section 4-0.01(g) in HB29 and HB30, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly (Virginia Acts of Assembly Ch. 1283 and 1289), to undertake essential business. All of the members of the respective public bodies and staff are participating from remote locations through Zoom Webinar. These meetings are being held electronically, unless a determination is made that it is safe enough for the meetings to be held in person in Conference Room 2000, at 301 King Street, Alexandria, VA. Electronic access will be provided in either event. The meetings can be accessed by the public through: Zoom hyperlink, broadcasted live on the government channel 70, and streaming on the City's website.

2. ROLL CALL

A. BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Elliott Waters, Razvan Cernucan, Geri Baldwin, Bonnie Naugle, Jessica Giroux, Elijah St. Dennis, Kathleen O'Connell

B. BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

C. STAFF PRESENT: Melodie Seau, Gwendolyn Lassiter, Kim Cadena (Zoom Technical Support)

D. OTHERS PRESENT: Michelle Krockner, NVAHA, AAHAC; Dr. Krystyn Moon, Mary Washington University

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Elijah St. Dennis moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Geri Baldwin. The motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER MINUTES: Bonnie Naugle moved to approve the December 2021 minutes, seconded by Elijah St. Dennis. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: No members of the public were present.

6. REPORTS

A. Chair's Report:

Chairman Waters noted that the Chair's Report included five Items.

- A call for volunteers to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee to revise the Bylaws
- The Planning Commission voted to recommend City Council approve the Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan during its December 8, 2021 meeting
- Helen McIlvaine has offered to have staff alert LTRB members to developer's community meetings regarding relocation

https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/housing/info/LTRBoard_January2022Agenda-InformationPacket.pdf

B. Staff Liaison Report:

Melodie Seau said that Virginia General Assembly will begin its session on January 12, 2022. She noted that there are many newly elected members of the House of Delegates including the City's former Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker. Ms. Seau said that there are 11 newly elected Republican and five Democratic delegates, shifting the majority of the House of Delegates to Republican.

https://publications.virginiageneralassembly.gov/display_publication/232

The City's legislative subcommittee will begin meeting every Friday on January 7 at 5:30 throughout the session to review City legislative priorities and bills introduced during the session. These meetings are open to the public and posted on the City calendar.

James Parajon will assume the position of City Manager on January 18, 2022. Mr. Parajon's background is in Planning and he is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

https://www.alexandriava.gov/news_display.aspx?id=125293

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Spirit Awards will be held on January 11, 2022, from 1 to 2 p.m. in City Hall, Council Chambers.

7. GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS:

Chairman Waters introduced Michelle Krocker and highlighted her biosketch as the Executive Director of Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance included in the Agenda Packet. Ms. Krocker also mentioned that she serves as the chair of the Alexandria Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, and that she is a resident of the City of Alexandria.

NVAHA has been working on developing a framework for improving landlord tenant relations. Ms. Krocker said NVAHA is a non profit affordable housing organization working with six Northern Virginia jurisdictions to promote healthy, sustainable and equitable communities that meet the diverse housing needs of Northern Virginia Residents. This includes advocacy, building political will, partnering with underserved communities, and conducting local research on housing needs.

Ms. Krocker discussed the affordable housing problem. She said that household income is not keeping pace with the increase in the cost of housing. More people across the region are paying higher percentages of their incomes for housing. Ms. Krocker added that we have lost much of our naturally occurring, privately owned housing. From 2000 to 2021 Alexandria lost 62% of its older market affordable housing.

Governor Northam introduced his 2022-2024 budget. We were fortunate that the investment in housing in the state was very generous. Virginia received \$580 million in federal funds for rental assistance and eviction prevention, and the general assembly adopted additional legislative protections for tenants.

NVAHA joined with Legal Services of Northern Virginia to create the Regional Eviction Prevention and Housing Stability Coalition. The group includes nonprofit service providers, legal and court services, a landlord association and representatives of local agencies including the Alexandria Office of Housing.

NVAHA is seeking to identify best practices that occurred during COVID to identify those that will continue to improve the relationships between, landlords, tenants, governments, and non profit service providers. Recommendations are:

- The right to legal representation
- Pay or quit notices increased from five-day pay or quit notices to fourteen-day notice and improve the language for non-English speakers
- Expunging COVID related eviction information
- Promoting eviction diversion and mediation between landlords and tenants

One of NVAHA's goals is to promote improving landlord/tenant relationships. Alexandria led the way in building positive relationships and a line of communication between local government and landlords so that the communication structures are in place. NVAHA used Alexandria as an example of developing relationships with landlords by doing outreach, introducing the office of housing, advising landlords of changes to laws in Virginia, and working collaboratively with landlords.

Ms. Krocker said that Landlord Tenant Boards and Commissions are poised to further the communication between landlords and tenants by convening opportunities for landlords and tenants to communicate and support an "Eviction Last" approach. This could include tenant education, continuing education for landlords, and developing wrap around services for tenants.

Chairman Waters thanked Ms. Krocker for the presentation. He asked what outreach is being done to other Boards and Commissions. Chairman Waters asked if other presentations have been done for other landlord tenant boards or commissions. Ms. Krocker said that this is the first presentation to a landlord tenant relations board, but she noted that the Northern Virginia Apartment Association, an association of landlords and property managers is part of the Regional Eviction Prevention and Housing Stability Coalition. The Coalition also includes property owners and landlord attorneys.

Chairman Waters asked if Ms. Krocker was aware of any tenant advisory councils in any apartment complexes in Alexandria. Ms. Krocker said that ARHA has a resident board and some of the nonprofit developers also have tenant advisory councils. Ms. Seau said that tenant organizations are usually started in response to specific issues. Tenants and Workers United also organizes tenants and advocates for their members.

Chairman Waters again thanked Ms. Krocker for her presentation.

Chairman Waters introduced Dr. Krystyn Moon, who will be presenting part two of her presentation from November. Dr. Moon spoke on the role of the federal government in housing discrimination and local activism. Dr. Moon spoke about the introduction of FHA mortgages for multifamily properties, early City land surveys of low-income areas, and the demolition large areas of homes by people of color.

Dr. Moon discussed the role of Urban Renewal and the development of Public Housing programs in segregating minorities. Dr. Moon said that in developing segregated public housing, the government pushed out minority homeowners, dislocating and limiting their options to becoming renters or being pushed out of the City altogether. Urban Renewal began in the 1930s to renew blighted areas by demolishing existing housing and replacing it with public housing. In Alexandria Urban Renewal was used to develop amenities for white households by displacing minority homeowners.

Dr. Moon discussed the Civil Rights movement and its impact on housing in Alexandria City. Civil rights laws gave minority landowners tools to fight displacement and increase compensation for property acquired by the government use of emanant domain. The Civil Rights movement led to fair housing, fair lending and other laws to prohibit housing discrimination. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a housing crisis which led to the development of the Landlord Tenant Relations Board.

8. OLD BUSINESS: No old business.

9. NEW BUSINESS: Election of Officers

A. Chair

Jessica Giroux nominated Bonnie Naugle for Chairperson, seconded by Geri Baldwin. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Vice Chair

Bonnie Naugle nominated Raz Cernucan for Vice Chair. Raz declined the nomination. Elliott Waters self-nominated for Vice Chair, seconded by Geri Baldwin. The motion passed unanimously.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Waters directed to Board to the agenda packet.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

Bonnie Naugle moved to adjourn seconded by Jessica Giroux. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:52PM.