



**HERNDON TOWN COUNCIL
Special Meeting – Affordable Housing Minutes
Thursday, September 19, 2024**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Olem called the September 19, 2024, Town Council special meeting – affordable housing – to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were: Mayor Sheila Olem, Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick; and Councilmembers Cesar del Aguila, Pradip Dhakal, and Keven LeBlanc.

Participating remotely: Councilmember Donielle M. Scherff.

Councilmember Naila Alam was absent.

Staff present during the meeting: Christopher Martino, Interim Town Manager; Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney; Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Acting Deputy Town Manager; Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development; David Stromberg, Zoning Administrator; Bryce Perry, Deputy Director of Community Development; and Amanda Kertz, Acting Town Clerk.

Determination of a Quorum

Mayor Olem stated, for the record, under Section 2.2-3708.3, Subsection D, of the Code of Virginia, and in accordance with Section 2-4 of the Town Code, the Chair received a request from Councilmember Scherff to participate through electronic communication means in tonight's special meeting due to an illness that prevents her physical attendance. She stated that there was a quorum of the public body physically assembled at the meeting location, with five Councilmembers present in the Herndon Council Chambers Building. With the concurrence of Council, Councilmember Scherff joined the meeting virtually to participate in the meeting that evening.

Mayor Olem determined there was a quorum of six members participating, five located in the Council Chambers, and one participating remotely in accordance with Herndon Town Code Section 2-4. Mayor Olem reminded the Council of the meeting decorum.

2. Discussion

a. Discussion of Affordable Housing Options In Cooperation with Fairfax County

Mayor Olem recognized Christopher Martino, Interim Town Manager, who provided introductory remarks for Tom Fleetwood, Director, Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development.

Mr. Fleetwood presented a PowerPoint and provided an overview of his presentation that evening, which included: (1) affordable housing status and availability in Fairfax County, (2) Fairfax County's affordable housing goals: (a) to produce a minimum of 10,000 new affordable units by 2034, and (b) commitment to no net loss of existing market affordable units, (3) affordable housing development around the Town; e.g. Ovation at Arrowbrook and the Herndon Harbor House, (4) future affordable housing projects, (5) how Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) and the Town can move forward together toward housing goals, and (6) the Town's continued partnership through the Housing and Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator position. Mr. Fleetwood shared that Brooke Hardin, Director of Community Development and Planning for the City of Fairfax, was in attendance that evening to provide input into the discussion.

There was discussion among the Council, staff, Mr. Fleetwood, and Mr. Hardin, about how Fairfax County and the Town can work together to partner on affordable housing, including: (1) following a process similar to the City of Fairfax to partner with Fairfax County on affordable housing, (2) potential role of proffers in addressing affordable or workforce housing, (3) administration of FCRHA's current affordable housing program, specifically the voucher process, and (4) how different levels of government funds, e.g., federal and county, impact housing programs.

Responding to Councilmember del Aguila's questions about the City of Fairfax and Fairfax County's partnership for affordable housing, Mr. Hardin described the process whereby the City of Fairfax amended their comprehensive plan and updated the zoning ordinance so that Fairfax County could assist them in administering an affordable housing program. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Fairfax City works with the FCRHA to administer the affordable dwelling units (ADU) in the City, while the City provides zoning enforcement for the program.

Responding to Councilmember Scherff, Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney, discussed proffers relative to affordable housing. She stated that since 2016, Virginia localities have not been able to provide a list of proffers directly to developers. However, a developer can offer specific proffers to the locality.

Responding to Councilmember del Aguila, Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development, stated that the Planning Commission is currently reviewing the Transit Related Growth (TRG) area, and staff is examining zoning areas throughout the Town. The staff plans to work with Mr. Fleetwood's staff to determine the most appropriate areas for affordable housing. Once this effort is compiled, staff will return to the Council with more information.

Mayor Olem mentioned previous discussions between the Town and Fairfax County about using some of the land owned by Fairfax County Park Authority near Alabama Drive for affordable housing. Responding, Mr. Fleetwood stated that the conversation Mayor Olem referenced was about the Berkdale Apartments and a Fairfax County park near Alabama Drive. He stated that he could not speak about that matter directly, as the land was owned by the Park Authority.

Supervisor James Bierman, Dranesville District, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, stated that he told the Park Authority that he believes using the land Mayor Olem mentioned for affordable housing is a good idea. He said that project would involve using park-owned land and the redevelopment of the Berkdale Apartments. It would involve several entities - the Town, Fairfax County Park Authority, and FCRHA. Supervisor Bierman also advised that the County has successfully engaged developers in new affordable housing projects by having County-owned land be available at lower prices.

Responding to Councilmember del Aguila, Mr. Fleetwood stated the FCRHA could advise and work with the Town when the wait list opens for the voucher program.

Responding to Vice Mayor Hedrick, Ms. Yeatts and Ms. Gilleran advised that the best practice is to amend the Comprehensive Plan first before adopting policy through the zoning ordinance. Ms. Gilleran advised that toward the end of the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, staff could begin looking at language to amend the zoning ordinance.

Following discussion and with the consensus of Council, staff was requested to: (1) draft a road map of the process to proceed with affordable housing in the Town, (2) further investigate the Berkdale Apartments and Fairfax County Park Authority land idea; address any concerns from the County on that project, and (3) work with the FCRHA to publicize when the wait list for the housing voucher program next opens. Ms. Gilleran advised that the staff needed some time to go through the research and review the process.

There were closing comments from the Council, thanking the staff, Fairfax County representatives, and community members who attended the meeting that evening.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Olem adjourned the September 19, 2024 Town Council special meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Amanda E. Monaw Kertz

**Amanda E.M. Kertz
Chief Deputy Town Clerk**



Minutes approved by Town Council: December 10, 2024