



Fairfax VOTER

June 2015

Volume 67, Issue 10

Affordable Housing: It's About People!

When it comes to affordable housing, we think of the homeless in cities, but the same problems exist in the suburbs as well. Poverty is growing faster in the suburbs as more suburban residents are becoming poor. Many of the homeless suffer from mental illness and/or substance abuse and others have chronic health problems and/or physical disabilities.

Fairfax County aims to end homelessness in 10 years. How big is the problem and how can this goal be reached? Prepare yourself by reading this month's study and participate in your unit meeting discussion.

Calendar

June 2015

- 6 Briefing and At-Large Meeting
- 8-11 Unit Meetings
- 10 Skyline Plaza Election
- 13 LWNCA Board Meeting
- 15-18 LWVUS Council: "Celebrating Our Past, Embracing the Future."
- 17 Board Meeting
- 19 School ends
- Have a Wonderful Summer!



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Presidents' Message



This is my last message as co-president of LWVFA. Janey George and I were elected as co-presidents in 2011 as an experiment in shared responsibilities for the office. I feel that this League "experiment" has been a success. Each two elected co-presidents will develop their own roles in the job, as Janey, Helen and I have done. The commitment, while time consuming, can be very interesting and rewarding and I am proud to have had this experience. As we go forward, I am sure that Peggy Knight and Helen Kelly will do an excellent job for our members.

I want to thank the current board for their hard work and dedication. Lois Page (Secretary), Bill Thomas (Treasurer), and directors Pat Nelson-Douvelis, Charleen Deasy, Barbara Nunes, Judy Helein, Baba Freeman, Ginger Shea, Sidney Johnson, and Sheila Iskra. They and all the members who have helped LWVFA are deeply appreciated.

Before the end of my term, I want to finish organizing the 12 League file drawers in the office. I found documents from 1948 (when LWVFA became a recognized League) to the present. Throughout all of these years, our mission has remained the same:

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase the public's understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

We have advocated for improvements in our schools, clean water, clear zoning laws, juvenile justice laws, affordable housing, public transportation, and so many more topics. Check out "Here We Stand - LWVFA Full Positions" on our website to refresh yourself on our informed thoughts which we have developed over the years. We should be proud of our present and former members for the studies that they did arriving at these positions.

Since the last Fairfax VOTER, we have sent delegates to the LWNCA and LWV-VA conventions. Check the various websites to see what transpired at these meetings. All the delegates are thanked for representing our members.

Plans are being made for exciting programs next year and for ways you can volunteer to further our mission - especially educating the public about the candidates and issues on the November ballot. The Voter Service planners have been very busy and have scheduled everything from TV appearances to local Meet and Greet meetings. See their list and mark your calendars. As members of the newly elected board take office, I'm sure that they want to see you at their events - as organizers, volunteers, and audience members.

Take care, promote the League's mission, and enjoy the summer,

Julie

Voter Registration Training Schedule Now Available

Planning to help the League sign up voters? Fairfax County requires that all people who register voters are properly trained and that you annually renew your training after July 1. More information on how to become qualified can be obtained through <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/vregtraining.htm>

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2014 - 2015

This newsletter, partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area Education Fund, is published 10 times each year - from September to June by:

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or call 703-658-9150

Conflict of Interest and Voter Manipulation: Compelling Reasons for Redistricting Reform

by Lois Page, LWVFA Secretary

Brian Cannon, the keynote speaker at LWVFA's Annual Meeting last month and the Executive Director of One Virginia2021, got into redistricting reform because of what he remembered about being on one of the winning teams on a redistricting map-drawing competition in 2011. Cannon was in law school and studying election law when he took part in the competition, open to colleges and law schools throughout the state, which the Virginia State League helped to host.

Noting that the League of Women Voters has been advocating for redistricting reform since before he was born, Cannon thinks reformers have a chance of succeeding this time around because 1) computer programs now make it



easy to redistrict fairly and easily, 2) people on both the far right and left of the political spectrum are starting to become uneasy with incumbent protection and conflict of interest in the present system and 3) the statewide push for reform, which has enlisted a number of organizations, has started early and is going all over the state to build up regional boards.

“Fair has been hijacked,” he said. Even with voter protection laws being fixed, the situation would not be improved without redistricting reform. If we can fix this, a lot of other improvements will fall into place. He said our neighborhoods are being carved up to ensure elections. It is hurting our democracy and getting worse because of the computer programs in the hands of those seeking reelection. Only 19 incumbents have lost a race since the 2003 House races.

Cannon illustrated the results of our present system by talking about how far his present congressman is from his own residence and hence his community of interest. Many in the audience could relate. He showed a map of Virginia's state Senatorial District 37 that graphically showed how carved up we are locally.

He sees reform as a bipartisan issue. Although Republican Delegate Cole and Speaker Howell control the subcommittees where reform bills die, because of grass roots outrage, for the first time in the recent General Assembly session, one member changed his vote. In the Senate, Democratic Senators Barker and Saslaw voted against the redistricting coalition-backed bill. Cannon said the ability to choose one's own voters can be an overwhelming temptation. However, supporters of both parties respond to the fact that the current system is a conflict of interest and a manipulation of the vote.

One Virginia2021's solution: an independent commission plus nonpartisan criteria. The board itself would not be nonpartisan because that is too hard to achieve, but it can be independent. The group's proposal is a seven-member board, one appointed by each party in the House and the Senate plus three state office holders. Five votes would be needed to pass a proposal, and the no votes could not come from the party representatives. The crucial criteria would be that no political data could be used to draw the maps. He agreed that this latter point would be hard to ensure, but right now it is not against the law to use such data. Making it illegal would be helpful. And changing the criteria right away would require only a change in the code.

His advice to advocates is to emphasize the conflict of interest, the splitting of neighborhoods, and vote manipulation that are part of our current system. Avoid emphasizing competitiveness as this is too difficult to bring about. We cannot rely on the courts to fix this as they have made it clear, in spite of some recent cases in Alabama and Virginia in which gerrymandered districts were sent back to be revised, that this is a political issue. Our democracy needs to be fixed. We all need to contact those who have power over the reform process.

Cannon became Executive Director of One Virginia2021 in January of this year. He brings over a decade of experience in nonprofit leadership, community building, fundraising, and bipartisan advocacy for state policy issues. Previously, he worked as a consultant with startups and high-growth companies.

“Meet and Greet” Sessions Scheduled for This Fall

Mark Your Calendars!

Please Plan to Attend Your Own Magisterial District “Meet and Greet” and one of the Fairfax Public Access TV Station Events in the Merrifield/Mosaic District

Public Access Events

AUGUST 31. Monday, 7-10 p.m. One three-hour media event at the Fairfax Public Access TV station (Channel 10) for all candidates for Senate and the House of Delegates.

SEPTEMBER 28. Monday, 7-10 p.m. One two-hour media event at the Fairfax Public Access TV station featuring interviews with candidates for the four county-wide positions who have fewer opportunities to meet the public.

OCTOBER 13. Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. LWVFA-PTA event for Chair of the Board of Supervisors and At-large School Board. Venue TBD; Organizer: Beth Tudan, 571-340-5819, league@lwv-fairfax.org

Magisterial District Events

SEPTEMBER 9, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m. Springfield District, West Springfield Governmental Center; Organizer Dianne Blais, 703-830-1998, dianneblais@aol.com

September 16, Wednesday, 7-8:30 p.m. Mount Vernon District, Sherwood Regional Library; Organizer, Jere Gibber, 703-768-6987, jgibber@aol.com

SEPTEMBER 21, Monday, 7-9 p.m. Sully District candidates for Senate and House of Delegates, Sully District Governmental Center; Organizer: Leslie Vandivere, 571-213-6384, lvandivere@cox.net

SEPTEMBER 30, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., Lee District Governmental Center; Organizer: Jane Hilder, 703-960-6820, jc.hilder@verizon.net

OCTOBER 7, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m. Providence District, Providence Community Center; Organizer: Tania Hos-sain (Chair, Providence District Council), 703-489-5999, taniahossain@aol.com

OCTOBER 8, Thursday, 7-9 p.m. Braddock District, Kings Park Library; Organizer: Maggi Luca, 703-978-4916, mkluca@aol.com

OCTOBER 14, Wednesday, 6:30-9:30 p.m, Dranesville

District, McLean Community Center; Organizer: Pat Nelson-Douvelis, 703-790-1092, gpdouvelis@aol.com

OCTOBER 21, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m, Mason District, Woodrow Wilson Library; Organizer: Janice Hill, 703-415-1537, janicelh21@verizon.net

OCTOBER 24, Saturday, 2-4 p.m, Hunter Mill District, Reston Community Center; (the only afternoon session); Organizer: Sidney Johnson, 703-476-0581, sidney-johnson3@verizon.net

OCTOBER 28, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m, Sully District candidates for county-wide offices, Sully District Governmental Center; Organizer: Leslie Vandivere, 571-213-6384, lvandivere@cox.net

PLEASE SIGN UP WITH YOUR UNIT CHAIR OR WITH SIDNEY JOHNSON TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH AN EVENT, OFFER TO DRIVE OTHERS TO AN EVENT, HELP WITH PUBLICITY, OR ANYTHING ELSE.

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LAP – What Is It?

By Barbara Nunes, Domestic Violence Chair

The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) is nationally recognized and used in 35 states, including Maryland, to assist victims of domestic violence. The program trains first responders--in most cases the police--to work with various county agencies to get victims connected with help as early as possible. Since victims are most at risk immediately after an incident, making victims aware of the services that are available can give them options for help.

The program is currently working with the police departments in Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and the towns of Herndon and Vienna. Training includes watching for signs and indicators of need, and teaches helpful approaches. Police have been given a one-page questionnaire to help identify a victim's needs. Cell phones are provided to connect victims with the 24/7 hotline maintained by the Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services. The new program should be operational in June. Since the program identifies problems and provides options for help, it is thought to save lives.

Affordable Housing: It's About People!

By Mary Jane Cleary and Judy Helein

The simple truth about affordable housing is that it's about the people, not the housing. All people need a safe home.

People of all ages and all stages of life need a place to call home. They need housing that is safe, decent and affordable. We know that housing is the platform upon which individuals and families build their security and stability, and this creates communities that are diverse, successful, and thriving.

Housing policy experts discuss area median income, low-income housing tax credits, density bonus and annual consolidated plans, but what really matters is the answer to the question: "Do people have a home? Are we creating communities that are resilient, that value economic and social diversity and that provide housing opportunities for households of all incomes?"¹

Poverty in the Suburbs

Poverty is growing in America, and since the 2000s poverty has been growing faster in the suburbs than it has in our cities. Using the U.S. federal poverty threshold as the guideline, from 2000 to 2010, the numbers of people in the nation's poor population grew from 33.9 million to a record 46.2 million. (In 2009, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guideline was an annual income of \$22,050 for a family of four. The 2010 figures were the same as 2009.)² In that time period, the percentage of the population living in the suburban areas of the 100 largest metro regions of the country rose by more than 53 percent. That was more than twice the rate of increase in cities, where the poor population grew by 23 percent. People living in poverty include every racial and ethnic group and more than 1/3 are children under the age of 18.

Sixty-six percent of poor suburban families have at least one resident who works full time or part time and 43 percent are female-headed households. There are many factors that account for this, but the data show us that the increased poverty isn't solely the result of poor people moving from the city to

the suburbs, although that does occur. **The significant jump in suburban poverty is because more suburban residents are becoming poor.** Suburban areas were hit harder than urban areas by the Great Recession, and the subprime mortgage crisis and foreclosures had a more severe impact on the suburbs, causing households to lose significant assets. Many people lost jobs and have yet to regain full-time employment. Those who are employed have lower-wage jobs or stagnant incomes making it difficult to get ahead. As a result, many workers live paycheck to paycheck.

While wages have remained flat, other expenses have increased – transportation, healthcare and especially housing costs, which have increased substantially.³

The Fairfax-Falls Church area is home to the second largest number of people without homes in our region. Only in Washington, D.C. are there more people without homes. Low incomes and expensive housing are the main reasons for

homelessness in our community. It is impossible to pay for an apartment when earning minimum wage – even if you work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- The monthly rate for a two-bedroom apartment is nearly \$1,600.

- A family

People-Who Need Affordable Housing

Low-Income Families

Librarians, Dental Assistants, Book Keepers, Social Workers, Elementary School Teachers, Electricians, Plumbers, Paralegals

Middle-Income Families

Teachers, Public Safety Workers, Nurses, Database Administrators, Architects, Physical Therapists, Computer Programmers, Dental Hygienists

Low-Wage Workers

Childcare Providers, Nurses Aides, Bus Drivers, Salespeople, Cashiers, Cooks, Custodians, Visual/Performance Artists, Teachers' Aides

Extremely Low-Income Seniors and People with Disabilities

People 65 years of age or older, People with physical, developmental, and mental disabilities who live on a fixed income such as Social Security

must earn \$28.25 an hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A family must earn an annual income of \$58,700 to afford a two-bedroom apartment.

Domestic violence, physical disabilities and poor health are also reasons for homelessness in Fairfax County. Forty-one percent of all persons in families were homeless due to domestic violence – an increase from 33 percent in 2014.

Fifty-five percent of single individuals who were homeless suffer from mental illness and/or substance abuse, a slight decrease from 57 percent in 2013, and many have chronic health problems and/or physical disabilities.⁴

These numbers and those that follow come from the annual Point in Time Count – a Fairfax-Falls Church community survey.

On the night of January 28, 2015, there were 1,204 people who were literally homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. People in families accounted for 59 percent of all people counted, consisting of 213 families with 715 people. The majority of people without homes in our communities are children and working families.

- 36 percent (431) of all persons who were homeless were children under the age of 18, a small increase from the last 3 years.
- 78 percent of adults in homeless families are female.
- 62 percent of adults in families that were homeless were employed, a slight increase from 59 percent in 2014.

Single adult individuals accounted for 41 percent of all homeless persons counted, a total of 488 people. 203 individuals were chronically homeless.

- 8 percent (39) of single adults were reported as veterans.
- 77 percent of the homeless individuals were male, an increase from 73 percent in 2014.
- 25 percent of single individuals who were homeless were employed, similar to the 24 percent in 2014.
- 25 percent (123) of the single adults were over 55 years of age.

Serving an aging population is an ongoing challenge.

Overall, the numbers represent an almost 2 percent reduction from the number counted in January 2014, or 21 fewer people. These results demonstrate the continuing decline in homelessness. The total decrease in the homeless population

from 2008 to 2015 is 34 percent. Adoption of Housing First and Rapid Rehousing models; heightened prevention efforts; prioritizing housing for the longest and most vulnerable homeless through the 100,000 Homes campaign; additional VASH vouchers; and the dedication of new housing options to the chronically homeless have made the continued decline possible.

The results would be even more substantial if additional housing options were available and sequestration had not eliminated access to Homeless Preference Housing Choice Vouchers. The reduction in homelessness will not continue at the same pace in the future without significant increases in the availability of affordable housing in general and specifically affordable housing designated for the formerly homeless.⁵



As part of its “Housing Blueprint” for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Fairfax County developed four goals:

- To end homelessness in 10 years;
- To provide options for the “special needs” population;
- To reduce the waiting lists (for currently available affordable housing) in half in 10 years; and
- To increase “Workforce Housing” through creating partnerships and public policy.⁶

The Blueprint listed the needs, existing resources, additional resources and additional County efforts. The Housing Blueprint included identifying opportunities for Residential Studio Units (RSU) development, and adoption of an RSU zoning ordinance.

Residential Studio Units

Background

Over the last number of years, probably at least since the “financial crash” of the mid-2000s, the need for affordable housing not only includes large- and mid-sized families of low economic means but also small families (two or three) and singles as the economy has slowed and wages have lagged. It has been determined by many “urban and urbanizing areas”—including New York, Boston and Seattle⁷—that there is a need for small units. These units are called by different names including “micro units” and “residential studio units (RSUs)”. Some of this type of housing is also made from shipping containers, the kind of “crates” that are used for packing shipped goods on cargo ships.⁸

“Micro Units”/RSUs Around the Country

During 2014, the Urban Land Institute Multifamily Housing Councils published a research paper about experiences various locations in the United States had with what they referred to as small or “micro units”. (They are not called RSUs in this paper.) They are mostly located in “high-density, expensive metropolitan markets” such as Washington D.C., New York, and Seattle. Some of the key findings of their research are as follows:

- “Micro unit” does not have a standard definition but what they refer to as a “working definition” is a “small studio apartment, typically less than 350 square feet, with a fully functioning and accessibility-compliant kitchen and bathroom”;
- smaller and micro units outperform conventional units in the marketplace;
- consumer research and case studies indicate that a segment of renters is interested in this concept;
- the economy of these units is the main appeal in addition to the location of the unit and the possibility of having a place of one’s own (in other words, no roommates);
- the developers of these units are mainly targeting young professional singles, usually under 27; secondarily, they are also considering such units for couples and roommates, some “older, move-down singles”, and people who want a unit for visits to a desirable location (e.g., New York City);
- the developers and architects have been able to come up with units that are compliant with the federal Fair Housing Amendment Act and accessibility requirements;
- if the units are developed within a “community,” the developers also include some attractive ameni-

ties such as cyber cafes, community rooms, and pools; and

- some developers are now trying the idea of a mix of studio and one-bedroom units.⁹

Proposals for the Development of RSUs in Fairfax County

A proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow the development of RSUs was authorized during July 2013, with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (Board or BOS) directing the Planning Commission to conduct public outreach. Thereafter the Planning and Zoning Commission created a Residential Studio Committee to conduct the outreach and discussion.¹⁰

The RSU Committee proposed an amendment to the current zoning laws to provide for RSUs that would predominantly be for persons with an income of not more than 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) of the County. The existing County Zoning Ordinance and Board policies did not offer housing that is specifically for single occupant households whose income is 60 percent of AMI or less. (This is the equivalent of approximately \$45,000 per year.) Several recent studies of the County show that “...there has been and likely will continue to be an increase in single person households...” Additionally, “...while the proposed Amendment does not specifically state an occupancy limit of one person per studio unit ...such occupancy limits are governed by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VSUBC).¹¹ Since the size of the RSU will be 500 square feet (see information below), it is likely that the units will be inhabited by one person.

In August of 2013 the RSU Committee suggested a Proposed Amendment to the current Zoning Ordinance that defined “Residential Studios” as follows:

“A multiple family residential building(s) or portion(s) of a building(s) comprised of not less than three (3) or more than seventy-five (75) efficiency (zero bedroom) dwelling units on a lot, subject to further limitations imposed by the Board, and which may include permitted accessory uses and structures that are designed to be used solely by the tenants of such residential studio units. Occupancy shall be limited to rental tenants only. Not less than eighty (80) percent of the total number of units shall be subject to tenant income and rental rate limits such that the units serve households whose income is not more than sixty (60) percent of the median income for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (WMSA)...”¹²

This Proposed change also included a section titled

“Additional Standards for Residential Studios,” of which there were 15. These included such things as:

- a requirement that each studio unit not have any bedrooms (as mentioned above) and not be any more than 500 square feet of gross floor area, inclusive of an in-unit bathroom and kitchen;
- only being established on a parcel of land fronting on, and with direct access to, a collector street or major thoroughfare;
- no development should exceed 75 units;
- the units must be compatible with any existing development on the lot in terms of density, uses and scale;
- if a building is to be proposed to be converted to RSUs, it cannot be co-located on a lot with any single family dwelling;
- the minimum off-street parking requirement is to be based upon one space per residential unit, plus such spaces as are necessary for any accessory units, as determined by the Board;
- initial lease terms are for not less than six months nor more than one year; renewal terms may be on a month-to-month or other term basis but shall not be for longer than one year for each renewal period;
- there are to be laundry facilities either within the individual units or in a separate room within the building, which, if the latter, shall be at least one washer and one dryer for each 10 RSUs; and
- each development is to have a resident manager or 24-hour on-site manager on the property, or the Board may approve a property management plan that demonstrates sufficient off-site management of the development.¹³

According to the Staff Report, this kind of housing has been “successfully developed” in southern parts of Virginia, including Charlottesville, Richmond, Virginia Beach and other Tidewater areas.¹⁴

After the development of a draft proposal, the Staff discussed it with a large number of various groups in the County who are interested in the housing issue, including the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority/Department of Housing and Community Development, Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services, and the McLean Citizens Association. The Staff Report indicates that “in general, the comments were predominantly supportive” but there were a number of concerns raised: “the proposed parking rate is excessive when housing a population who does not drive;

the parking rate is too low and will create parking issues; income limits are too high to accommodate the very low income population; use is not appropriate in the more rural areas; and a maximum density should be implemented”, among others.¹⁵

Further, the Staff Report indicates that in addition to new construction of RSUs, there is the possibility of converting unoccupied buildings such as hotels, office buildings, and “big-box” retail spaces into studio units. Another possibility would be to co-locate such units near commercial and retail areas where permitted by the amended Ordinance.¹⁶



According to statistics reported in a December 2013 George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis study—“Housing the Region’s Future Workforce 2012-2032”—“the region’s new housing must be priced so that it is affordable to these new workers...44.1 percent of rental units will need to have rents of less than \$1,250 per month, while only 2.4 percent of the rental demand will be for units priced at \$2,250 a month or more.”¹⁷ In the County’s “Housing Blueprint” from 2013, the “Fair Market Rent (FMR)” set out for the County by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for FY 2010 for an “Efficiency” housing unit is \$1,156 whereas the FMR for units of one- to four-bedrooms goes from \$1,318 to \$2,522.¹⁸

After the series of public hearings and meetings were held and the collected comments were considered, the proposed definition of “Residential Studios” was amended as follows:

“A multiple family residential building(s) or portion(s) of a building(s) comprised of efficiency (zero bedroom) dwelling units. The maximum number of residential studios that could be permitted on a lot shall be no more than seventy-five (75), or as otherwise limited by the Board. Occupancy shall be limited to rental tenants only wherein not less than eighty (80) percent of the total number of units shall be subject to tenant income and rental rates such that the units serve households whose income is not more than sixty (60) percent of the median income for the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area (WMSA)...”¹⁹

Action Regarding RSUs in Fairfax County

The Residential Studio Committee passed a motion during June 2014 that recommended to the Planning Commission and the Board that the consideration of residential studios be discontinued and the Committee be adjourned.²⁰ This

was because the Committee had decided that they were “unlikely” to reach consensus, citing a number of reasons. They also recommended that further community discussion about affordable housing, “. . .including a discussion on how best to provide a range of housing opportunities, including residential studios, that will serve the County’s current and future residents at all income levels” be held.²¹ In a follow-up memorandum requested by the Committee, the senior assistant to the zoning administrator summarized the key discussion issues as: the impacts on Single Family Residential Districts, parking, proximity to transportation opportunities, occupancy, enforcement and property management, modifications of additional standards, income limits and mixed income, housing needs, and “general,” the latter of which included the proposed maximum unit size (500 square feet).²²

At the end of July during a meeting of the full Planning Commission, the Commission accepted motions from the Residential Studio Committee, voting to discontinue discussion of the Proposed Residential Studio Zoning Ordinance, to disband the Residential Studio Committee, and to have the full Planning Commission recommend to the Board that they discontinue discussion of the Proposed Ordinance but have a broader community discussion about affordable housing, including residential studios.²³ The Board of Supervisors did not vote on this recommendation.

Possible Follow-up

At a housing panel discussion held on March 20, 2015, in Tyson’s Corner, the discussion covered the future of jobs, types of jobs, types of persons holding those jobs, and the need for affordable housing in the northern Virginia region. The participants included the Housing Directors of Fairfax and Arlington Counties and the City of Alexandria. The Fairfax County Director, Kurt Creager, told the attendees that the County needs to “triple its efforts” to meet the current and coming need for affordable housing units, including “micro units”.

He also said that the quality needs to be good enough so that neighborhoods will welcome them, and that they may need to have demonstration units in the County so that people can consider how they work and that they work. Helen McIlvaine, the Acting Director of the Office of Housing in Alexandria, said that the city is looking at “micro units,” which may eventually become senior housing. The city does already have some, which are 220 square feet each.

Given the information contained in the Urban Land Institute’s research study, which was developed in conjunction with developers and others who have worked with these types of

units, there are various ways to determine what is needed and workable in the Fairfax area. Since the George Mason University study shows that there will be a significant need for such housing stock in our area in the not-too-distant future, this may be the time for local officials and residents to work together to determine the best way to consider bringing such housing into the area.

We Can End Homelessness Campaign

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness launched its 2015 We Can End Homelessness campaign during a presentation to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at its regular meeting on Tuesday, April 28. This year’s campaign includes three components to raise awareness and funds to help end homelessness in our community: the Mannequin Project, the Mayors Challenge and the Build a Village fundraising initiative.

The Mannequin Project is designed to raise awareness that homelessness does exist in one of the nation’s wealthiest counties. Beginning on April 28, a series of mannequins will be on display in locations throughout the county representing the faces of homelessness that exist in real life in our area. With placards asking residents “Do You Know Me? Can You See Me?” mannequins will depict people of all ages and backgrounds, and each will have unique story assigned that tells of someone local who suffers from homelessness. These mannequins will be on display until June and will encourage residents to take notice of the problem locally and get involved with local nonprofits and programs to help make a difference.

Fairfax County’s involvement in the Mayors Challenge was announced in early January, when Board of Supervisors’ Chairman Sharon Bulova agreed to have the County become part of the national effort to end veteran homelessness in 2015. The challenge was first announced by the First Lady Michelle Obama and amplified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the National League of Cities.

To Build a Village fundraising initiative represents the ultimate goal of the We Can End Homelessness campaign. Businesses, civic, faith- and community-based organizations and individuals will be asked to be engaged in ending homelessness through their involvement and financial support. Donors may buy a virtual brick or house online by providing monetary donations to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. Proceeds will go further the Partnership’s programs and

to provide housing solutions for those who are currently homeless. In light of the Mayors Challenge, efforts this year will be focused on providing housing and related services to veterans.²⁴

Footnotes

- (1) Northern Virginia Housing Alliance. <http://nvaha.org/thepeople>
- (2) U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS Poverty Guidelines for the remainder of 2010, August, 2010.
- (3) Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube, *Confronting Suburban Poverty in America*, 2006
- (4) <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/homelessness-in-our-community>
- (5) <http://fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/point-in-time/pit-2015.htm>
- (6) Fairfax County Housing Blueprint At A Glance FY – 2011
- (7) Staff Report, Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment—Residential Studios, Fairfax County, Virginia-August 27, 2013—P. 3.
- (8) An example of this can be found in a *Washington Post* article, November 6, 2014, headlined “A village of metal boxes rises in Israel”. They were made into housing units for Israeli students.
- (9) Urban Land Institute, “The Macro View on Micro Units”, Copyright 2014 (Washington, DC), Pp. 4-5.
- (10) Department of Planning and Zoning (Fairfax County, Virginia), Memorandum, Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment Regarding Residential Studios, July 28, 2014, P. 1.
- (11) Staff Report, P. 3.
- (12) Staff Report, P. 15.
- (13) Staff Report, P. 24.
- (14) Staff Report, P. 4.
- (15) Staff Report, P. 4.
- (16) Staff Report, P. 5.
- (17) George Mason School of Public Policy, Center for Regional Analysis, Arlington, Virginia, “Housing, the Region’s Future Workforce 2012-2032”, “Summary of Key Findings”, Sturtevant, Lisa, Ph.D., and Chapman, Jeannette, December 2013, P. 2.
- (18) Fairfax County (Virginia) Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Housing Blueprint: Glossary of Terms, P. 2.
- (19) Planning Commission RSU Committee (Fairfax County, Virginia) Draft Amendment, April 9, 2014. P. 1.
- (20) Department of Planning and Zoning, Memorandum, P. 1.
- (21) Department of Planning and Zoning, Memorandum, Attachment 2.
- (22) Department of Planning and Zoning, Memorandum, Attachment 3.
- (23) Planning Committee (Fairfax County, Virginia) Verbatim Excerpt, July 30, 2014.
- (24) <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2015/we-can-end-homelessness-campaign-kicks-off.htm>
- (25) Ending Homelessness, Implementation Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community, Volume 1, pgs. G-3 and G-4, March 31, 2008

[Ed. Note: Graphic on page E-1 abbreviated from material provided by the City of Austin, TX.]



Discussion Questions

1. Who needs affordable housing in our area?
2. What are the obstacles to affordable housing in Fairfax County?
3. What types of affordable housing are needed and would work in our area?
4. Comment on the strategies that the County is using to help those in need of affordable housing.
5. How would you suggest the County approach the issue of affordable housing? Who should lead the effort?
6. Should the League be involved? Do you have any recommendations for League (national or local) action?

This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

Topic: Affordable Housing: Its About People!

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the "At Large Meeting" and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of May 1, 2015, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

Saturday, June 6

10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

Packard Center
4026 Hummer Road
Annandale 22003
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401

Monday, June 8

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

Hunters Crossing Classroom
Spring Village Drive
Springfield 22150
Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

Wednesday, June 10

9:30 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon Dist. Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria 22306
Contact: Gail, 703-360-6561

9:30 a.m. McLean Day (McL)

StarNut Café
1445 Laughlin Ave.
McLean 22101
Contact: Sharone 703-734-1048
or Adarsh 703-356-8368

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

7902 Bracksford Ct.
Fairfax Station 22039
Contact: Lois 703-690-0908

11:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)

Dogfish Ale House.
Chantilly 20151
Contact: Leslie, 571-213-6384

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE) **NEW LOCATION**

Hunter Mill District Community Room B
1801 Cameron Glen Drive
Reston, VA 20190
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

Thursday, June 11

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

11908 Paradise Lane
Herndon 20171
Contact: Charleen 703- 620- 3593

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

7827 Anson Court
Springfield 22152
Contact: Nancy 703-256-6570

1 p.m. Fairfax/Vienna (FX-V)

Oakton Regional Library
10304 Lynhaven Pl.
Oakton 22124
Contact: Bobby, 703-938-1486 or
Liz, 703-281-3380

7:45 p.m. Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)

Paul Spring Retirement Community
Mt. Vernon Room
7116 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria 22307
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820

Have a Wonderful Summer!

Next Issue: September



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER ©
June, 2015
Julie Jones, Co-President
Helen Kelly, Co-President
Ron Page, Editor
Liz Brooke, Coordinator

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Dues year is July 1 through June 30. Current dues year ends June 30, 2016.)

Membership Category: Individual \$65 ____ ; Household (2 persons-1 VOTER) \$90 ____ ; Donation \$ ____
 Student \$32.50 ____ ; (Coll. Attending _____)

Membership is: New ____ ; Renewal ____ ; Reinstate ____ ; Subsidy Requested ____

We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.

Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check payable to LWVFA Ed. Fund.

Please Print Clearly!

Name _____ **Unit** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip + 4** _____

Phone (H) _____ **(M)** _____ **E-Mail** _____

Thank you for checking off your interests:

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Govt | <input type="checkbox"/> Voting Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence |

Mail to: LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403