**AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE COMMISSION ON AGING**

Date: September 12, 2023
9:30 am to 11:30 am

"Affordable Housing for Seniors Session #1- Issues, Perspectives, and Challenges"

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 9:30AM

Commissioners In Attendance: Wayne Berman (co-chair), Betsy Carrier (co-chair), Laurie Pross, Joyce Dubow, Mona Grieser, Mary Sweeney, Sibo Ncube, Marsha Weber, David Engel

Staff: Pazit Aviv, MoCo; Gemmena Murchison, MoCo

Guests: Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Dana Hirsch, Jewish Council for the Aging; Kuo-Hwa Wang (public guest); and Representatives from the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC): Meta Lim, Ellen Goff, Alex Torton, Charles Poulson

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chair: Wayne and Betsy welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda that featured a presentation and discussion with representatives from the MoCo Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC). Wayne said that this is the first of what will be a series of sessions on Affordable Senior Housing in MoCo, that will serve to educate the committee on the issues surrounding this important and very relevant topic. This first session is intended to help lay a foundation for the Committee's longer-term advocacy, educational, and communication efforts on Affordable Housing, including a possible public forum in the future.

Approval of the Minutes: The June 13, 2023, meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSIONS:
After some brief background remarks, Wayne introduced Mary Sweeney who spoke about some issues surrounding affordable housing in Montgomery. Mary then introduced representatives from the HOC to talk about affordable housing from their perspective and the challenges that they face.

Mary opened her remarks by stating how important it is to get people who need to find affordable housing the right information, services, and place to go. There is an important need to better direct people to available resources and to understand who is eligible for affordable housing. Mary's thoughts were echoed by Dana Hirsch (JCA) who said that people have a hard time navigating websites and people don't know about how to look for available housing services.

With this introduction, our guest speakers from the HOC were again introduced. Meta Lim, Ellen Goff, and Charles Poulson are all with the Housing Resource Division of the HOC and were the primary speakers at the meeting. The Housing Resources Division provides customer and program services to the Housing Opportunities Commission ("HOC") clients through the Housing Choice Vouchers ("HCV") and Project-Based Voucher ("PBV") Programs.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program ("HCV") is a HUD program that allows very low-income families to choose and lease safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing. The HCV statistics are as follows:

- Program Baseline: 7,770 families; Currently serve 8,520 families in Montgomery County (Includes incoming families that have the flexibility to easily change residences).
- HOC can allocate PBV to 20% of their allocated HCV Program = 1,554. Units.
- 1,122 PBV units under contract.
- 481 units dedicated to seniors.
- 34% of HCV customers are elderly and 32% of HCV customers are disabled.

There are two types of HCV Assistance subsidies available.
1. **Tenant Based Voucher.   This type of** subsidy is transferable anywhere in the Continental US.   It is designed to implement individual Housing Assistance Payment Contracts (HAP) for a term period of 1 year.
2. **Project-Based Voucher (PBV).   This type of s**ubsidy is tied to specific units and is non-transferable. It is designed to execute one HAP Contract for all designated units. The HAP Term is for 20 years.

PBV Senior Opportunities. The HOC administers several PBV Contracts with landlords who provide senior housing. Eligible candidates for PBV Senior Properties must be at least 62 years old and meet all eligibility requirements. The candidate must apply directly to the property once selected from the Housing Path Waitlist and determined eligible for program assistance. The applicant must also meet the screening requirements of the potential landlord. **At present there are 481 Designated Units in PBV Senior Properties. These include:**
- Bauer Park (55)
- Homecrest House (38)
- Oaks at Olde Town (7)
- Pointe View at Aspen Hill (40), 1 available
- Randolph Village (9)
- Revitz House (115), 2 available
- The Leggett (26)
- Victory Crossing (49)
- Victory Forest (87)
- Victory Towers (27)
- Willow Manor at Fairland (28)

The HOC has a variety of affordable and market rate housing for seniors throughout Montgomery County and they are continuing to develop family and senior housing to increase the availability of affordable and mixed income housing for County residents. There are currently 10 HOC properties for residents ages 62 or older with 1,438 units under a variety of affordable housing programs with a range of income requirements. Several properties have subsidies including Project-Based Rental Assistance ("PBRA") and Project-Based Vouchers ("PBV") where residents pay 30% of their income toward rent.

Additional subsidies administered by HOC are available through Victory Housing senior properties at Victory Crossing in the White Oak area of Silver Spring (PBV) and Victory Haven in Damascus (PBRA). The HOC is currently developing Hillandale Gateway, a contemporary, amenity-rich mixed-income development in the White Oak area of eastern Montgomery County. Hillandale Gateway will add another 155 units of affordable senior housing when it opens in 2026 with units ranging from 30% to 80% of Area Median Income ("AMI"). Properties with PBRA subsidies have site-based waiting lists for each property. Applicants for PBV subsidies are called-up from the Project-Based Voucher waiting list. Applicants can apply to site-based waiting lists or subsidy waiting lists through HOC's Housing Path wait list system via a link on HOC's webpage at www.hocmc.org.   Information about HOC properties is available on the HOC website and property websites. HOC is currently working to update their website to provide a better customer experience and for ease of

navigating properties and obtaining housing information. Additional assistance can be provided by the HOC Call Center at 240-627-9400 or help@hocmc.org.

Finally, the HOC staff talked about applying for Assistance. Applicants must apply for Tenant-Based Vouchers or Project-Based Vouchers via HOC online waitlist portal:

- https://www.hocmc.org/rental-programs/housing-path.html

HOC maintains two separate wait lists: one for each program. Applicants are selected in the order of the date/time of their application submission. Preference is given to applicants who live and/or work in Montgomery County. The staff reviewed eligibility requirements, including income limits and admission processes.

Following the presentation, the HOC staff engaged the committee members in a lively questions and answer session that focused on issues of equity and access to HOC services and resources. It is a complicated process for someone to go through to get HOC housing. There is a long list of people waiting for services. The HOC staff understood how complicated that process is and the need to move the waitlist along faster. They are working to streamline their websites and looking for opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing. The AIC committee offered to help in any way to improve the HOC services, including reviewing the website update.

BUSNESS MEETING:
As part of the business meeting, the AIC committee agreed to continue the education on affordable senior housing at the October 10th meeting. At that meeting the discussion needed to feature a representative from the MoCo Department of Housing and Community Development.

Because so much time was spent with the staff of the HOC, the business meeting was ended and will be continued at a later meeting.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 10th at 9:30 am. The topic of Affordable Senior Housing will be continued with a featured speaker from the MoCo Department of Housing and Community Development.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made and seconded to adjourn meeting at 11:50 am