



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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2012 Feb 16 AM 11:00

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**Committee Members**

**Maryclare Whitehead,  
Chair**

Amina Amissi  
Jennifer Bible  
Lincoln Cummings  
Saundra Green  
Shawneece Hennighan  
Pam Holcomb  
Gretel Larocca  
David Remmick  
Michael Spotts  
Greg Staff  
Benjamin Thrutchley  
Dawn Willard  
Larry Withers

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February 15, 2012

County Manager  
Members of the County Board  
Arlington, Virginia

At a meeting held on Wednesday, February 7, 2012, the Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee (CDCAC) reviewed a staff recommendation regarding allocating up to \$3,000,000 of CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Revolving Funds for the acquisition, demolition, and eligible predevelopment costs associated with the Shell Gas Station site located at 5511 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA 22204 and purchasing an adjacent underutilized portion of the neighboring Harvey Hall property. The Committee considered information on the future development of the site for a mixed-use 83 unit affordable housing complex to be developed by AHC, Inc. which was presented by AHC and County staff.

The Committee unanimously supported the proposed use of the CDBG Revolving Funds conditioned on the provision that AHC, Inc. will relocate the existing playground on the portion of the Harvey Hall property to be acquired to another suitable location on the remaining Harvey Hall parcel. If the playground cannot be relocated for any reason, a comparable or better quality playground shall be installed.

Should you have any questions, please contact David Bennett, Community Development Planner III, at (703) 228-3762 or at [dbennett@arlingtonva.us](mailto:dbennett@arlingtonva.us).

Sincerely,

Maryclare Whitehead  
Chair



CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON HOUSING

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TEL 703.228.3760 FAX 703.228.3834 www.arlingtonva.us

Holly Bray,  
Chairman

March 8, 2012

Hon. Mary Hynes, Chairman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: AHC Shell Site

Item #29 on the County Board agenda for March 10, 2012

Dear Ms. Hynes:

At its March 1, 2012 public hearing, the Citizens Advisory Commission on Housing considered the allocation of Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) funds as a loan to AHC Inc. to assist with the construction of a new affordable housing complex located at Columbia Pike and South Greenbrier Street. This item was also presented at the Bricks and Mortar Subcommittee meeting.

The Commission advises the County Board to allocate up to \$3,750,000 in AHIF funds to facilitate the new construction of an 83-unit affordable housing complex by AHC Inc.

The Commission vote on the motion was 6-0-1. Members in favor are Ms. Bray, Mr. Certosimo, Ms. Falvey, Ms. Hogan, Ms. McSweeney and Mr. Withers with Mr. Browne abstaining.

This project meets several affordable housing goals and targets including:

Creates 83 new committed affordable housing units (Goal 5/Target 5B)

Creates a newly constructed building in compliance with EarthCraft or LEED (Goal 4/Target 4E)

Adds 63 two-bedroom and 5 three-bedroom units (82% of project total will be family-sized) to the stock of Committed Affordable housing (Goal 7/Target 7B)

Creates 6 supportive housing units

It is important to note that the Commission did receive testimony from Ms. Mancilla, President of the Columbia Heights West Civic Association. They are concerned with the concentration of committed affordable rental housing units in Columbia Heights

West and the difficulty in getting tenants, as opposed to home owners, involved in the local civic association. We raised a question and a challenge to AHC to work directly with Columbia Heights West Civic Association to help engage their residents in community activities.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holly Bray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Holly Bray  
Chairman

Columbia Heights West Civic Association (CHWCA)  
c/o Linley Mancilla  
5402 8th Street South  
Arlington Virginia, 22204



February 24 , 2012

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd.  
Suite 300  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Dear Board Members:

On January 17, 2012, AHC appeared at the Columbia Heights West Civic Association (CHWCA) meeting to give a presentation to Columbia Heights West (CHW) residents on their proposed 83 unit committed affordable housing project to be located at the corner of S. Greenbrier St. and Columbia Pike. The proposed site currently includes the Shell gas station. AHC has been negotiating with the owners to purchase this site. AHC proposes to build a 6 story building (first floor retail; five floors of housing) by combining the Shell site with an adjacent piece of steep graded property which AHC already owns. Arlington county housing staff was also present to respond to questions from attendees. Meeting participants were told this will be a form base code (FBC) project. As the site area of the proposed project is 40,000 sf or less, we understand it is approved administratively.

During the discussion, attendees asked about increasing the height of the building to 9 stories in order to make the property a mixed income one. We were told that AHC had discussed this with the County but were advised that, as a FBC project, it could not exceed 6 stories (although, it was pointed out, the 5500 Columbia Pike apartment complex directly across the street from the proposed site is 9 stories). Increasing the height provided the possibility of including market rate housing, and would match the height of the Harvey Hall Apartments, which are directly behind the site and are also owned by AHC.

Another concern raised was the impact on an already tight parking situation in the neighborhood. AHC said that it is common for parking spaces to be under-utilized at their properties. AHC will also add several new public parking spaces on Columbia Pike. There will be retail located on the first level of the building and CHW residents want to ensure that there will not be spillage into neighborhood parking.

Concerns were also raised about the impact of the project on the Harvey Hall park. AHC plans to relocate the park. Also noted were security related concerns regarding use of the park by non-Harvey Hall residents. AHC said they would investigate this concern further.

**The major issue** discussed related to the number of committed affordable housing units already existing or soon to be built in Columbia Heights West. The county provided a chart showing a total of 754 **Committed Affordable Rental Units** for CHW: (Arbor Heights (previously Magnolia Commons) - 198;

The Fields - 189; Harvey Hall - 115; Key Gardens - 22; Monterey - 109; and the upcoming Arlington Mill Residences - 121. In addition, there are another 15 committed ownership units in CHW. This brings the total committed affordable units in our neighborhood to 769. The AHC project would add another 83 units for a total of 852. The 2010 Census shows that there are a total of 2,638 housing units in CHW; affordable units (769) comprise 29% without AHC and 32% with AHC units (852).

While CHW residents recognize the need for affordable housing in Arlington, we are concerned about the high percentage of committed affordable housing concentrated in CHW as the figures above demonstrate. We understand that the issue of affordable housing concentrated along the Columbia Pike corridor has also been raised as a concern by the Columbia Pike Housing and Land Use Plenary group. In addition to the committed affordable housing in CHW, other CAF's along the Pike include: Columbia Grove (210); Buchanan Gardens (111) and Quebec Apartments (129) for a total of 1,219-1,302 (with/without new AHC project) units along Columbia Pike. There are only a few neighborhoods in Arlington with a high volume of affordable housing. Additional affordable housing should be distributed throughout the county - not focused in just a few neighborhoods.

Residents in the community have strongly voiced their support for mixed income properties rather than locating all affordable units in one building or complex or neighborhood. In order to maintain a sustainable neighborhood, we must diversify our income base so that everyone can benefit from and enjoy a good quality of life.

As we understand that this project is qualified as an administratively approved FBC housing project, there is apparently nothing the CHW community can do to change the parameters or location of the project. If this is not correct, please do let us know. However, we did want to bring to your attention the concerns noted above.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss with us, please contact Linley Mancilla either at [lmancilla@gmail.com](mailto:lmancilla@gmail.com) or 202-340-0512. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Linley Mancilla  
President, CHWCA

Linda LeDuc  
Past President, CHWCA

cc: AHC  
Housing Commission  
Columbia Pike Housing and Land Use Working Group  
CPRO