

Arlington County Tenant-Landlord Commission
2021 Annual Report

Members: Members: David Timm (Chair), Kirit Mookerjee, Kristen Clegg, Matthew Whitfield, Bismah Ahmed, Nicole Merlene, Emily Camardo, Chris Wimbush. The Commission held 10 meetings during the year, no meetings in August and December.

A work plan was developed and approved in January to guide meetings for the year. Several presentations took place to provide information and update Commission members on ongoing housing initiatives and current policies that guide the work of the Commission. These included Relocation Guidelines and TAF Policies, DHS Housing Assistance and Eviction Prevention Programs, VRLTA (101), Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP), Affordable Housing and the Planning Process and the Virginia Rent Relief Program

Relocation Plans/Projects: The Commission reviewed and approved the following relocation plans:

Project Name	Month approved
Whitefield Commons	January 13, 2021
Arlington View Terrace	July 29, 2021
Marbella	October 13, 2021

Legislative and related Recommendations – [Letter](#) submitted to the Count Board November 2, 2021 highlighted three recommendations.

[Letter](#) submitted to Arlington General District Court recommending use of a coversheet similar to other jurisdictions, to accompany Unlawful Detainers to better ensure that landlords are complying with the statutory requirements regarding rental assistance applications early in the eviction process.

County Budget – Presentations from DHS and Housing Finance Unit. No specific recommendations on the county budget.

Public Comments: The Commission heard comments from eight members of the public on matters related to tenant landlord issues. Noted among these were residents from the Serrano, where there were severe deferred maintenance problems which resulted in coordinated attention from the County.

Subcommittee Reports:

- During 2021, the **Publicity and Public Outreach** subcommittee designed and discussed distribution of a flyer promoting the T-L Commission monthly meeting. Improved outreach on County related sites such as Housing Arlington and Community Engagement; networked with housing advocacy organizations and advised greater consistency in responding to issues raised at Public Comment.
- During 2021, the **Housing Discrimination** subcommittee discussed housing discrimination based on criminal history and source of funds. The subcommittee reviewed the Arlington Landlord Partnership alternate screening criteria and the model policy for tenant screening released from the VA Attorney General. Source of Funds became a protected class in VA

Fair Housing Law on July 1, 2020 and the subcommittee has been updated on the progress of implementation in Arlington County.

- During 2021, the Eviction Prevention subcommittee reviewed the subcommittee's charge document from 2019 and agreed upon objectives. Katharine Cater of Arlington Thrive gave a presentation on Arlington Thrive's role in emergency services in the County and causes for evictions. Reviewed all new eviction laws and regulations and discussed ways to reach out to all tenants to raise awareness of tenant rights and protections. Discussed updates and outreach efforts concerning Virginia's Rent Relief Program.

Affiliate Report: Bu-Gata Tenant organization provided an annual report on tenant complaints/concerns with management companies, access to rental assistance and collaborations with community partners and agencies.

Representation on other Commissions:

- Nicole Merlene represents TLC on CDCAC;
- Kristin Clegg joined the Ft. Henry Gardens Site Plan committee which postponed meetings pending revisions to the proposed site plan.
- Commissioner Mookerjee participated in a panel on Commissions at the Neighborhood College Program.
- Joint subcommittee meetings with the Housing Commission: Joint subcommittee formed to address pressing resident concerns about housing conditions of maintenance at a CAF property- the Serrano. Intention to identify effective communication, accountability, and coordination to address systemic maintenance issues.