

Embark Housing Advisory Group
Meeting Summary

October 25, 2018

- Committee Members in attendance: Nick Bracco, Will Jasper, Stanley Koussis, Elisabeth Lardner, David Levine, Pam Michell, Georgia Rangel.
- Opening Remarks: Taylor Holland, Chief of Staff from Supervisor McKay's office, opened the meeting and indicated that there would be some absences among members. He stated that the materials for this meeting can be discussed at the meeting as well as be taken home and reviewed, with members having the opportunity to provide comments later.
- Embark Housing Advisory Group Road Map Check-In: The Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Tom Fleetwood, reviewed the Road Map, specifically noting items for October-November, and stated work was moving along regarding benchmarks on the Map.
- Update on "Market Affordable" Survey: Vin Rogers, Director, FCRHA Policy, Reporting and Communications for HCD, stated that the effort is a little behind the Road Map target of being completed in October-November, with completion now anticipated a little bit further along the timeline. Mr. Rogers stated that Nick Bracco helped HCD with a contact at Co-Star and that the County initiated a Purchase Order with Virginia Tech University that should be completed during the week or the following week. Virginia Tech will utilize Co-Star data but will also do follow-ups regarding the information.
- Continued Discussion of Embark Housing Strategies: Mr. Rogers stated that staff took comments from the last advisory group meeting and created an Embark Housing Strategies graphic, provided to the advisory group members and explained by Mr. Rogers, beginning with the Outer Ring that represented the principles that surrounded the two types of strategies located inside the ring. Mr. Rogers pointed out the backup document that was also given to the members that elaborated on the principles and strategies. A discussion ensued and Elisabeth Lardner pointed out that while the overarching principles reflected preservation of affordable housing, none touched upon producing additional affordable housing. Mr. Fleetwood stated that a new principle may be ensuring that new production occurring in the Embark area needs to include a significant portion of units affordable at 60 percent of Area Median Income or below.

Mr. Rogers stepped the Advisory Group through the strategies (the Inside the Ring portion of the narrative document), stating that the strategies could be listed in a different order if the advisory group preferred. When the strategy involving Opportunity Zones was described, Mr. Fleetwood stated that HCD could ask Scott Sizer of the County Executive's Office, who has been involved with Opportunity Zones, to provide a briefing to the advisory group on this. Other recommendations were:

- Regarding Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Transferable Development Rights (TDR) strategies, it was determined that consulting with the County Attorney was the next step to be taken.
- Regarding density bonuses, Sophia Fisher agreed to report to the advisory group next month on how Arlington County provides bonus density. It was requested that

material on this be provided in writing in advance of the November meeting and that a slot on the agenda be provided for discussion of this.

- David Levine pointed out that, under “Housing Development Reflects Community Needs”, the focus needs to be not only on current needs, but future needs as well.
- In response to a suggestion from Nick Bracco regarding leveraging public investments, language regarding having the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) act as a catalyst in acquiring land for public-private partnerships was proposed.

Advisory group members were encouraged to send any other comments, and discussion on the Embark Housing Strategies will resume at the next meeting.

- Citizen Time: During Citizen Time the following comments were made:
 - A citizen expressed concern that people didn’t know about the advisory groups efforts, and he felt that affordable housing is a concern among the residents of the area, specifically that people will be driven out of the community due to the Embark effort. Mr. Fleetwood stated that a big charge of this advisory group is to see that housing is preserved and that the partnerships that the FCHRA has with groups on the Richmond Highway Corridor allow the FCRHA to serve many people with needs. Elisabeth Lardner also commented that the concerns about driving people out of the community is a reason that this group was formed.
 - A citizen stated that she had been advocating for having higher than 12 percent of residential units in new developments in the Embark area be affordable housing and was wondering if the percentage could be allocated among a spectrum of income levels. She advocated presenting this to developers with steps on how to bring this about.
 - A citizen inquired whether co-ops had been discussed as a way for people to improve their housing situations. Mr. Fleetwood stated that the FCRHA undertook three different co-ops in the past as a homeownership model, and that only one is still active today. He stated that, over time, the co-op ownership model has a lot of governance and other issues, including there not being many lending/financial opportunities. The citizen also inquired whether land trusts were being considered. Mr. Fleetwood stated that community land trusts have not been undertaken in Fairfax County yet, but it is something that can be looked at.
- Vin Rogers stated that the next Embark Housing Advisory Group meeting will be November 29, 2018, and will be back at the Mount Vernon Governmental Center. Mr. Fleetwood stated that staff will take information that was discussed and revise the Embark Housing Strategies documents. Any additional thoughts or comments from advisory group members should be shared with staff via email.