



Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board CAAB Meeting Minutes

Remote Participants: Heather Thomas, Sandra Barksdale, Hunter Doe, Lisa Washington, John Forrest, April Hall, Debi Alexander, Maria Leiva, Michael Mahrer, Marcia McDevitt, Michele Menapace, Felicia Webster, Tanya Tavassolie, Will Guthrie, Juana Cruz, Brian Reach, Debra Graves, Nermin Abdelwahab, Nicole Tapia

Absent due to medical reasons or personal matters: Michelle Jefferson, Ben Zuhl, Ken McMillon, Bronia Ashford, Shari Zamarra, Caroline, Hunter Doe, Alice Yam, Caroline Hockenberry

Guests: Laura Lazo, Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Heather Thomas.

Motions to Proceed with Members' Electronic Participation: Motion to proceed with electronic meeting made by Heather Thomas seconded Michele Menapace and passed.

Presentation:

Fairfax County's 2027-2031 Consolidated Plan Presentation: By Laura Lazo

The plan guides the use of federal funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program (\$5.8 million annually), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) (\$2 million annually), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program (\$500,000 annually). The Consolidated Plan includes five key components: Citizen Participation, Needs Assessment, Market Analysis, Strategic Plan, and Action Plan. The presentation highlighted challenges including rising housing costs, limited affordable housing availability, and barriers to homeownership. Laura explained that Area Median Income (AMI) in Fairfax County is approximately \$152,000 for a family of four and is used to determine eligibility for housing programs. Planned investments include rental assistance, housing rehabilitation, nonprofit services, fair housing programs, down payment assistance, and homelessness prevention. Board members provided suggestions for increasing community engagement through schools, community centers, local organizations, and newsletters. Laura thanked the Board for its feedback and shared that the final plan and citizen guide would be available after HUD approval.

Heather Thomas read the mission of the CAAB

Minutes: Michele Menapace moved to approve the minutes as corrected, John Michael Forrest seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Membership and Elections Committee Report:

Heather Thomas reported that the Committee recently met to review the Board's membership status. The CAAB currently has 26 members, with additional appointments pending. Efforts continue to fill remaining vacancies, including the PTA representative position, which has been vacant since Debbie Fitzpatrick's departure. Heather noted that there is strong interest in filling

the position and expressed optimism that the remaining vacancies will be filled soon. We are close to having all the openings filled.

CCFAC Update:

Michele Menapace reported that the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC), a volunteer group of approximately 24–40 community members, completed its review and scoring of funding pool applications and submitted its report to CCFAC. CCFAC will spend the coming year reviewing the SAC's recommendations and working with County staff to evaluate potential improvements to the funding pool process, including application limits, funding caps, collaboration among nonprofits, and scoring practices. Michele noted that previous workgroups led to significant changes, including creating a separate competitive process for emergency food and shelter programs. During discussion, Michael Mahrer raised concerns about inconsistencies in application scoring among SAC review panels and questioned whether additional oversight could improve fairness. Michele acknowledged the concerns, stated they would be part of the upcoming review process, and encouraged members to share additional data and recommendations as CCFAC begins its work for the next funding cycle.

CAAB Member Sharing:

Michele Menapace shared that the Human Services Council recently received an update on the County's Guaranteed Basic Income pilot program. She, Susan Al-Suqi, and Heather Thomas are working to bring the presentation to the CAAB or, at a minimum, provide members with a copy of the report.

Nermin Abdelwahab inquired about the plans for a community poverty simulation and recommended forming a subcommittee to move the project forward, noting it would be difficult to organize during regular monthly meetings and the Board agreed to continue planning and include the initiative as a recurring agenda item.

Marcia McDevitt reported that the League of Women Voters is recruiting election officers and certified voter registrars. She also shared that the League is expanding voter registration outreach in schools and senior housing communities.

Adjournment: The motion to adjourn was made by Michele Menapace, seconded by John Michael Forrest and passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.