

MOTION promoting advisory council use (more fully), as a best practice in good governance

Given the clear understanding that the City of Alexandria, Virginia has a strong commitment to citizen/resident participation in good governance as evidenced by the number of citizen/resident boards, commissions and committees established by its City Council, I _____ move that the Landlord Tenants Relations Board (LTRB):

- A. recommend that City Council adopt a policy which encourages establishing advisory councils, as a best practice in the City of Alexandria, and that
- B. public/private non-governmental entities be encouraged to form advisory councils on a voluntary basis with the clear understanding that any/all advice offered is non-binding as is the case with existing non-statutory City boards, commissions, and committees, but that
- C. any/all advice rendered to recipients of the advisory council's advice [especially the decision-making body or agent], would be given serious consideration in addressing matters viewed as problems or challenges in a manner deemed both reasonable as well as transparent.

Focus: Advisory Councils are an affordable means to create trust, confidence, efficiency and effectiveness

Note: If deemed appropriate, suggest the Landlord Tenant Relations Board seriously consider seeking permission to conduct a forum or asking City Staff in collaboration with City Council to introduce and explain this policy to residents, especially landlords and tenants in keeping the purpose a similar forum was hosted on Saturday, Sept. 20, 2008 at the William Ramsay Recreation Center.

Source: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2008/sep/16/alexandria-bulletin-sept-18-24/>

The forum agenda addressed a variety of issues “that may affect renters in the City of Alexandria. State Senator Patricia Ticer and Councilman Ludwig Gaines will discuss Virginia landlord-tenant relations law, the Virginia legislative process, and the City’s initiatives to create and preserve affordable rental housing. Ronald Minionis, Managing Attorney of the Alexandria Office of Legal Services of Northern Virginia, will make a presentation on “The Ten Most Important Things Tenants Need to Know in Virginia.” Staff from the Alexandria Office of Housing and Bureau of Code Administration will provide information on services available to renters in Alexandria. The forum is free and open to the public, and no registration is required. Refreshments will be provided by Mango Mike’s Restaurant, Comcast, and Shopper’s Food Warehouse in Landmark Plaza. For additional information, call the Office of Housing at 703.746.4990. The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the City’s Human Rights Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act”.

Source: Release date: 2008-09-12 please visit alexandriava.gov/News

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION FOR MOTION

1. Background 2. Context/Basis for Motion 3. Proposed Staffing Coordination

1. BACKGROUND

A. Building landlord-tenant partnerships that work: Like most growing municipalities, the City of Alexandria located in the Commonwealth of Virginia is experiencing challenges related not only to new construction but maintaining or enhancing existing construction – some historic. Given the existing challenge and the fact that the City of Alexandria prides itself on promoting constructive community engagement [*in-person or virtual*] to help ensure the voices and perspectives of city residents are heard there are various boards, commissions and committees tasked with advising the City leadership – those elected and those appointed – on a range of vital civic concerns. The City has set an outstanding example in not only in seeking advice from residents through its community engagement program but has formed a number of boards, commissions, committees to ensure the diverse voices are heard prior to voting on or approving matters. This motion seeks to encourage public/private non-governmental entities to do likewise – by choice. Each year a number of concerns are brought to the attention of public/private officials affecting the quality of life and in many cases the health and wellness of people residing in residential apartments without input from tenant advisory groups. That said, there is ample research as well as experience to show that when tenants are given a voice in the landlords decision making, it can lead to “buy-in” which in turn leads to building healthy relationships evidenced in trust, confidence along with greater efficiency plus effectiveness in governance. Councils of advice work when formed and supported. Moreover, they are cost effective given that almost all are comprised of volunteers willing to give or their time and expertise for the common good of all. Replicating advisory councils at the public/private non-governmental residential level as part of an overall business practice to solve challenges at the residential level with tenant participation is an idea whose time has come rather than wait for a crisis where tension and finger pointing are likely to occur. This motion should be viewed as a preventive measure much like preventative medicine. Finally, a great argument can be made contending that advisory councils can work at the residential community level- all one need do is look at how the practice is working in our HUD housing. To be clear, I am not saying that advisory councils are the “perfect solution” to the all matters, rather I am saying the cost/benefit of having and encouraging the formation of voluntary advisory councils who provide “non-binding” advice is a no brainer idea whose time has come to a small city capable of doing great things when parties are committed to finding solutions that enhance the quality of life, human relationships and the environment to include property maintenance at affordable prices.

B. Traditional role of advisory councils: The role of a *non-governing* advisory board is not to make decisions, but rather to provide current knowledge, critical thinking and analysis to help public/private leadership in the City make wise/informed decisions – voluntarily. Simply put, the responsibility of the advisory board of which I speak like a governance board or board of directors in terms of composition (*with diverse and inclusive participants*) is different in terms of expected outcomes.

Note: The premise being tapped into here is a best practice of establishing, maintaining and strengthening healthy relationships in diverse inclusive ways and means promotes a strategic good manifested as well managed governance.

(1). The Purpose of an Advisory Council

Before forming an advisory council, it's crucial ... to decide what the advisory board's [purpose](#) will be. Common purposes for forming advisory councils are:

- (a). Providing technical expertise or advice in specific areas such as technology, science, health, policy, law, marketing, public relations, etc.
- (b). Helping spearhead a special project from planning to completion
- (c). Fundraising for a specific project
- (d). Providing an independent sounding board for the board of directors
- (e). Serving as an advocate for the organization
- (f). Fulfilling several roles for a nonprofit program where the organization serves as the fiscal agent
- (g). Serving in an honorary role
- (h). Offering services as a spokesperson for the organization

While the purpose of an advisory council varies based on the organization's needs, *all advisory councils should have a clear understanding of their purpose, guidelines and limitations.*

(2). Basics of Advisory Councils

(a). Advisory councils are a group of individuals that effectively supplement ...skills and abilities to help guide the organization toward its stated mission.

(b). Advisory councils don't typically have any authority. In most cases, the board of directors retains the ultimate governing authority. The primary [role of an advisory board](#) is to provide ...key information and to make recommendations to them on certain matters.

(c). As a collective body that's likely to have strong opinions, it's important ...to provide some type structure for their advisory councils so that their meetings are useful and productive.

It's helpful for advisory councils to have policies of their own...

(d). It's also important for advisory councils to have a [governing charter](#). A committee charter is a useful tool for providing a written description of the council's role and purpose. The charter provides guidelines on the council's membership, meetings and how and who they're expected to communicate with

Source: <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/what-is-an-advisory-council/>

C. Advisory councils work with uncomplicated transparent purposeful buy-in: I am keenly aware, that "councils of advice" currently exists in public housing and many homeowner associations as well as civic associations. We can learn from those that work such as in HUD housing where "trust" is achieved when I is willing to become we as in a team. Given that reality, we, the LTRB, are recommending that in those residential venues where Advisory Councils do not currently exist at the dwelling or apartment level that advisory councils be formed for the purpose of helping achieve a strategic vision in partnership with the City of Alexandria like the one currently highlighted in its strategic plan and subsequent supporting

implementation plans. We believe an important first step is establishing a ‘common sense’ policy which encourages the voluntary formation of advisory councils in those residential venues where they do not exist now is to make a commitment to work together to establish advisory council relationships to not only promote the common good of their residential areas but the good of public/private non-governmental successful businesses in Alexandria City.

Pt. 964 PART 964—TENANT PARTICIPATION AND TENANT OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLIC HOUSING

Source: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2018-title24-vol4/xml/CFR-2018-title24-vol4-part964.xml>

Subpart A—General Provisions

Sec.964.1 - Purpose.

964.3 - Applicability and scope.

964.7 - Definitions.

964.11 - HUD policy on tenant participation.

HUD promotes resident participation and the active involvement of residents in all aspects of a HA's overall mission and operation. Residents have a right to organize and elect a resident council to represent their interests. As long as proper procedures are followed, the HA shall recognize the duly elected resident council to participate fully through a working relationship with the HA. HUD encourages HAs and residents to work together to determine the most appropriate ways to foster constructive relationships, particularly through duly-elected resident councils.

964.12 - HUD policy on the Tenant Opportunities Program (TOP).

964.14 - HUD policy on partnerships.

HUD promotes partnerships between residents and HAs which are an essential component to building, strengthening and improving public housing. Strong partnerships are critical for creating positive changes in lifestyles thus improving the quality of life for public housing residents, and the surrounding community.

964.15 - HUD policy on resident management.

964.16 - HUD role in activities under this part.

964.18 - HA role in activities under subparts B & C.

964.24 - HUD policy on FIC Program.

964.30 - Other Program requirements.

Subpart B—Tenant Participation

964.100 - Role of resident council.

The role of a resident council is to improve the quality of life and resident satisfaction and participate in self-help initiatives to enable residents to create a positive living environment for families living in public housing. Resident councils may actively participate through a working partnership with the HA to advise and assist in all aspects of public housing operations.

964.105 - Role of the jurisdiction-wide resident council.

964.115 - Resident council requirements.

964.117 - Resident council partnerships.

964.120 - Resident management corporation requirements.

964.125 - Eligibility for resident council membership.

964.130 - Election procedures and standards.

964.135 - Resident involvement in HA management operations.

964.140 - Resident training.

- (a) *Resident training opportunities.* HUD encourages a partnership between the residents, the HA and HUD, as well as with the public and non-profit sectors to provide training opportunities for public housing residents. The categories in which training could occur include, but are not limited to:
- (1) Community organization and leadership training;
 - (2) Organizational development training for Resident Management Corporations and duly elected Resident Councils;
 - (3) Public housing policies, programs, rights and responsibilities training; and
 - (4) Business entrepreneurial training, planning and job skills.
- (b) *Local training resources.* HUD encourages the use of local training resources to ensure the ongoing accessibility and availability of persons to provide training and technical assistance. Possible training resources may include:
- (1) Resident organizations;
 - (2) Housing authorities;
 - (3) Local community colleges, vocational schools; and
 - (4) HUD and other Federal agencies and other local public, private and non-profit organizations.

964.145 - Conflict of interest.

964.150 - Funding tenant participation.

Subpart C—Tenant Opportunities Program

964.200General.

964.205Eligibility.

964.210Notice of funding availability.

964.215Grant agreement.

964.220Technical assistance.

964.225Resident management requirements.

964.230Audit and administrative requirements.

Subpart D—Family Investment Centers (FIC) Program

964.300General.

964.305Eligibility.

964.308Supportive services requirements.

964.310Audit/compliance requirements.

964.315HAs role in activities under this part.

964.320HUD Policy on training, employment, contracting and subcontracting of public housing residents.

964.325Notice of funding availability.

964.330Grant set-aside assistance.

964.335Grant agreement.

964.340Resident compensation.

964.345Treatment of income.

964.350Administrative requirements.

Subpart E—Resident Board Members

964.400 - Purpose.

964.405 - Applicability.

964.410 - Additional definitions.

964.415 - Resident board members.

964.420 - Resident board member may be elected.

(a) *General.* Residents directly assisted by a public housing agency may elect a resident board member if provided for in the public housing agency plan, adopted in accordance with 24 CFR part 903.(b) *Notice to residents.* The public housing agency must provide residents with at least 30 days advance notice for nominations and elections. The notice should include a description of the election procedures, eligibility requirements, and dates of nominations and elections. Any election procedures devised by the public housing agency must facilitate fair elections.

964.425 - Small public housing agencies.

964.430 - Nondiscrimination.

2. BASIS FOR MOTION

A. Does no harm

B. Intended to help those fearful of coming forward to voice concerns and advice a sanctioned forum to do so

C. In keeping with purpose of the LTRB to recommend constructive policy and advice to the City leadership

PURPOSE OF THE LANDLORD TENANT RELATIONS BOARD
The Landlord-Tenant Relations Board (LTRB) was established by City Council in 1971 to investigate and mediate landlord-tenant disputes and *to make recommendations to City Council with respect to public policies affecting landlords and tenants.* The duties, powers, and responsibilities of the LTRB found in Alexandria City Code reads: The duties, powers and responsibilities of the Landlord Tenant Relations Board can be found in §12-5 of the Alexandria City Code and include the following: (a) Consider grievances of landlords and tenants when grievances are referred to the Board by City Staff; (b) *Act in an advisory capacity to the City Council on public policies affecting landlords and tenants;* (c) Formulate and recommend legislative proposals to City Council; (d) Develop and publish guidelines and summaries regarding the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, and (e) *Participate in educational activities relating to landlord-tenant issues.*

3. Proposed Staffing/Coordination and Collaboration (addressee responses are optional)

If sending a response, please email it to the Vice Chair: ewaters325@gmail.com by Fri, 4/29/2022 – **THANK YOU!**

City Staff	Concur	Non-concur	Remarks/Contact: ●name or initials; ●email or telephone #
1. Department of Planning & Zoning			
2. Department of Transportation & Environmental Services			
3. Office of Housing			
4. Dept of Cmty & Health Svcs (DCHS)			
5. Department of Mental Health			
6. Racial and Social Equity Staff Officer			

7. Office of Human Rights			
8. Superintendent, ACPS			

Boards, Commission and Committees	Concur	Non-concur	Remarks/Contact: ●name or initials; ●email or telephone #
9. Affordable Housing Advisory Committee			
10. Commission on Aging			
11. Commission on Women			
12. Community Services Board			
13. Human Rights Commission			
14. Planning Commission			
15.: ACPS School Board			

Landlords	Concur	Non-concur	Remarks/Contact: ●name or initials; ●email or telephone #
16. Alexandria Housing Development Corp			
17. Alexandria Redevelopment & Hsg Auth			
18. Morgan Properties			
19. Southern Towers			
20. Wesley House Development Corp			

Other public/private non-governmental entities	Concur	Non-concur	Remarks/Contact: ●name or initials; ●email or telephone #
21. ACT for Alexandria			
22. Alexandria Bahai Center			
23. Alfred Street Baptist Church			
24. Beth El Hebrew Congregation			

25. Carpenter Shelter			
26. Chamber of Commerce			
27. Christ Church			
28. Departmental Progressive Club			
29. Federation of Civic Assns			
30. Goodwin House			
31. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church			
32. Legal Svs of Northern VA			
33. Muslim American Society			
34. NAACP			
35. New Hope Housing			
36. Northern VA Affordable Housing Alliance			
37. Senior Services of Alexandria			
38. St. Joseph's Catholic Church			
39. Tenants & Workers United			
40. Urban League			

Tenants	Concur	Non-concur	Remarks/Contact: ●name or initials; ●email or telephone #