

Landlord Tenant Relations Board June 2022 Chair's Report

Equitable Housing in Alexandria

Mayor Justin Wilson sent this message via social media on May 24:

“Next year the Fair Housing Act turns 55 years old. As the City works with its neighbors to fully implement the Act, including disparate impact, it will require uprooting structures that sustain systemic racism. Education is key, as the status quo has vocal defenders.” He includes images of the following letters in Alexandria Times about race and housing.

April 28, 2022:

Letter to the editor: <https://alextimes.com/2022/04/your-views-race-and-housing/>, which begins,

“Mayor Justin Wilson seems obsessed with race as his go-to reason for one of his ill-conceived policy proposals. In fact, his generally unchallenged comments on race are often directed at the community of homeowners as the predicate for increased density.”

May 20, 2022

My View column: <https://alextimes.com/2022/05/my-view-with-frank-putzu-misguided-approach-to-single-family-zoning/>, which begins,

“Single-family homeowners are increasingly coming under attack in Alexandria, and it's about to get uglier. City officials are planning to propose new zoning reforms aligned with the City of Minneapolis, which eliminated single-family zones in favor of hyper density. The rationale for new proposals to end so-called “restrictive” zoning and add “infill” housing to neighborhoods currently protected from overdevelopment is that single-family zoning intentionally perpetuates discrimination, and that new policies must be adopted to end this form of “apartheid,” as Mayor Justin Wilson has claimed in pressing for housing reforms.”

The related May 20, 2022, editorial also addresses this topic:

<https://alextimes.com/2022/05/our-view-destroying-alexandrias-historic-character-one-decision-at-a-time/>

These public comments may affect the work of the city's planning and zoning and housing departments, and equity plans. I shared our motion on equity with Mayor Wilson via the city website.

Ongoing work to address equity issues

Reply to Mayor Wilson's tweet above included this note:

The Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing will be completed later this year.

<https://www.mwcog.org/community/planning-areas/housing-and-homelessness/fair-housing/>

About the MWCOC fair housing project, from its website:

Where you live continues to have a significant impact on your life outcomes in the metropolitan Washington region. COG works to support local governments in their duty to affirmatively further fair housing and prevent discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing so

that all residents can choose to live in communities with access to quality schools, jobs, transportation, and housing that is affordable for a range of incomes.

One way that COG is helping local jurisdictions meet fair housing requirements is through collaborating on a Regional Housing Equity Plan (also known as the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice or AI).

You may be interested in this ongoing fair housing expo:
<https://www.novahousingexpo.org/tablemwcg.html>

Tabled Motion #2

MOTION #2: BEST PRACTICES

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

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, Elliott Waters moves that the Landlord Tenants Relations Board (LTRB):

- recommend that City Council adopt a policy which encourages establishing advisory councils, as a best practice in the City of Alexandria, and that
- 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
- 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.

Questions for consideration: Should the LTRB move to encourage the City of Alexandria to create advisory councils outside of the commissions and boards to provide advice to public and private entities about _____? Should we define areas that are not addressed by current boards and commissions? How would this be determined?