City of Alexandria, Virginia
Department of Community and Human Services
Virtual Social Service Advisory Board Meeting Notes
January 12, 2026

Present: Josh Barnathan (Chair), Karen Carter (Vice Chair), Shawna Gary, Ann O' Hanlon, Allison Greenleaf, Jenna Mayer, Lesa Gilbert (DCHS Staff), Angela Almonte (DCHS Staff), Ashley Caison, Mary Horner (Office of Housing), Abby Curran Horrell

Absent: Jordan Nally

Call to Order/Welcome:
The January virtual meeting was called to order by Josh Barnathan (Chair) at 7:05 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Mary Horner, Division Chief (Office of Housing) Housing 2040 Updates

Mary Horner, Division Chief of the Landlord Tenant Team, provided an overview of housing programs including rental assistance, permanent supportive programs (SPRAP), and the Housing Master Plan.

Overview and Timeline:

- Mary Horner discussed some strategies and shared that all strategies will be released on February 20th.
- The Housing Master Plan 2040 serves as a comprehensive map for the next fifteen years, building upon the 2013 plan.
- This plan expands beyond landlord and tenant rights to include broader social services.
- City Council work session presentation in January, Community Meeting February 28th, Public Hearing in June, Implementation phase in July.

Resident Engagement:

The Office of Housing focused on community engagement sessions throughout the City and conducted a survey. Survey responses (1,200 received from mid-November to late January) identified the following key concerns:

- Cost of housing
- Fear of displacement
- Quality of life

Recommendations were made for affordable housing, accessibility and housing, empowering residents to attain housing stability and economic mobility.

State-Level Legislative Reform Advocacy Focus:

- **Just Cause Eviction:** Require legitimate reason to evict.
- **Required Rent Payment Plans:** Mandate payment plan options for tenants.
- **Limit Excessive Junk Fees:** Cap mandatory internet, pet, amenity, and common area fees.
- **Relocation Assistance:** Require landlord-funded assistance for residents facing physical or economic displacement.

Eviction Prevention and Legal Support Advocacy:

- Access to legal information, guidance, and representation, including guaranteed free attorneys for subsidized housing tenants and voucher holders.
- Continue emergency rental assistance funding and explore rapid pre-filing assistance and direct property partnerships.
- Implement emerging intervention tools and build agile systems to rapidly adopt and pilot eviction prevention opportunities and best practices.

Social Services Support highlighted in the Housing 2040 Master Plan:

- Help households sustain and overcome barriers to homeownership through first-time homebuyer training, financial education, and participation in savings clubs.
- Funding for people below a certain Area Median Income (AMI) to help complete home modifications.
- Work with ARHA to explore opportunities to expand access to homeownership for Housing Choice Voucher recipients, including through participation in Family Self-Sufficiency or similar programs.
- Support renters in building savings and wealth through financial self-sufficiency counseling, financial and debt management education, and retirement planning tailored to renters' needs and goals, as well as access to savings and investment platforms.
- Collaborate with committed affordable housing providers to offer rent reporting to credit agencies to help renters build their credit scores.

Approval of minutes: The minutes of the December meeting were approved with no changes by SSAB members.

SSAB Member Updates:

- SSAB member Maura Miller will no longer be serving on the board.
- Mental Health Wellness Coalition meeting is scheduled for February 4th, 6:00-7:30 PM at Del Pepper Community Resource Center Cafeteria.
- Landmark Coalition: Survey Mission Statement went out to vote. Lesa Gilbert (DCHS Staff) requested that SSAB members inform her if someone would like to be added to the contact list for the Health Department.

SSAB Chair/Vice-Chair Election

- SSAB members discussed the election of a new chair and vice chair. Discussion centered around moving towards a co-chair structure.
    - This would require a change to the bylaws and SSAB members decided to review the bylaws during the February meeting.
- Jenna Mayer and Karen Carter (Vice Chair) expressed interest in serving as co-chairs
- Bylaw amendments will be prepared for the next meeting. Josh Barnathan (Chair) will send a reminder for the review of the bylaws

DCHS Reminders:

- DCHS Funding Opportunities: Grant reviewer volunteers still needed.
- Landmark/Van Dorn Coalition: Monday, January 26, 6:30-8:00 PM (details to be sent out).

Upcoming Meetings:

- SSAB members discussed off-site location options for March meetings, including church locations with meal service, West End ALIVE! Hub, ALIVE! Transitional Housing, Community Lodgings, and Domestic Violence shelter housing.
- **Next Meeting Date:** February 9th
- **Location:** In-person, Del Pepper Community Resource Center Room 1352
- **Time:** 7:00 PM

Meeting Adjourned: 8:03 PM