

Minutes: Housing / Community Development Subcommittee

April 9, 2018

C. Vernon Gray Conference Room

George Howard Building – Ellicott City, MD

The meeting began at 3:07 p.m.

In attendance: Anne Brinker, Paul Casey, Ana Cisneros, Kim Flowers, Bruce Rothschild, and Coleen West. Also attending, Jeff Meyers, Council staff.

Melissa Rosenberg, Executive Director of the Howard County Autism Society, and Mark Dunham, a consultant to the Society briefed the Subcommittee about the Society's plans for a housing initiative. Once individuals leave school, the individuals lose a variety of services. The Society created a Transition and Adulthood Committee to explore models of intergeneration housing that would be beneficial to all of the various residents and fill a gap that now exists. This housing initiative is in the planning stages, however, it is expected that a model community would consist of about 65 units, about half of which would house seniors with the rest divided between adults with disabilities and families. The Society is exploring seed funding ("Catalyst Campaign"), looking at development partners, and studying similar projects elsewhere. A prospectus should be available in July. By the end of the year, the Society expects to have a development partner. A robust discussion was cut short by lack of time, so Ms. Brinker will collect questions from Subcommittee members for consolidation and forwarding to the Society. Mr. Dunham's presentation is posted on the Task Force website.

Coleen West, Executive Director of the Howard County Arts Council, briefed the Subcommittee about the history, activities, finances, and impact of the Arts Council in Howard County. She also described the impact and benefits of arts and arts-related activities on the economy and quality of life in the County. Spending on the arts has a high rate of return. Ms. West described some of the challenges for artists and arts organizations including funding, low pay, fragile budgets, cost of living, and lack of appropriate spaces. Howard County, compared with other jurisdictions, shows weak individual and corporate philanthropy devoted to the arts. Additionally, on a per capita basis, Howard County spending is about half of Montgomery County spending. Ms. West sees needs to create additional spaces in suitable locations where community artists would not be displaced by institutional programs. She also sees a need for more coordination between emerging arts entities across the County including Downtown Columbia and Ellicott City. Ms. West's presentation is posted on the Task Force website.

The meeting ended at 4:15 p.m.

