

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE

The Affordable Housing Task Force (AHTF) was established by unanimous vote of Town Meeting on May 3, 1999. The purpose was to quantify the need for affordable housing in Arlington, and find solutions that work. An important part of the Task Force's work is to help the Town move closer to fulfilling the statewide goal that 10% of the units in all municipalities be affordable to low and moderate income households. During this past year, the Task Force worked on the following initiatives.

Inclusionary Zoning Changes

The Task Force is proposing changes to the Affordable Housing section of the Zoning Bylaw that will change the way prices are set for affordable condos and rents set for affordable rental units, such that the units will be affordable to people with lower incomes. Currently all prices are set to be affordable to households at 80% of median income (\$59,550 for a family of 3). The amendment, if successful, will change the pricing such that condos will be affordable to households at 70% of median income (\$52,106 for a family of 3) and rental units will be affordable to households at 60% of median income (\$44,663 for a family of 3). This amendment will appear on the Town Meeting Warrant for Spring 2007.

Affordable Housing at Symmes

With the redevelopment of the Symmes Hospital site Arlington will get its biggest addition of affordable housing in decades. The anticipated 200 units of new housing will include 30 affordable condos (15%), and an additional 10 "Middle Income" condos, (affordable to households at 81% to 120% of median income). The Task Force recommended to the Redevelopment Board that 5 affordable units and 5 middle income units be reserved for Town employees, to provide an incentive for Town employees to stay in Arlington. Many Town employees, such as teachers, firefighters, police, and librarians, cannot afford the price of housing in Arlington, leading to high employee turnover. Additionally, 16 affordable units and 5 middle income units will be reserved for Arlington residents.

Additional Affordable Housing

During the past year, the Housing Corporation of Arlington purchased 18 units that were renovated and preserved as affordable rental housing for smaller households. Additionally, Arlington granted its first comprehensive permit, which will add four townhouse condominium units for moderate income families.

Other housing issues on the table include accessory apartments and using Town owned land or buildings for affordable housing, which the Task Force has already begun discussions.