



AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONFERENCE

of MONTGOMERY COUNTY • MARYLAND

www.affordablehousingconference.org

Our mission is to educate, promote and build coalitions to address affordable housing issues and seek solutions.



*Congressman Chris Van Hollen
at the May 8, 2009
Affordable Housing Summit*

*Home Ownership panelists
George Rothman, Manna;
Josh Silver, NCRC;
Silvia Rodriguez, GCAAR*



The Conference's "Break the Barrier to Home Ownership" program has provided \$142,500 in closing cost assistance to 21 families since 2001.



*The Seide family,
2009 closing cost winners
in front of their new home
in Clarksburg, MD*



*Conference Co-Chairs
Barbara Goldberg Goldman
and Norman Dreyfuss*

*Senator Ben Cardin and
County Executive Ike Leggett*





SAVE THE DATE

Monday, May 3, 2010

The Affordable Housing Conference
of Montgomery County
19th Annual Summit

Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center

The 2010 Summit will address the volatile economic climate and its effects upon the viability and sustainability of neighborhood preservation and affordable and workforce housing. Rental and Home Ownership Programs will be highlighted. Hear from the experts and decision makers!

For additional information or questions about registration and sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

Lise Tracey, Executive Director, 301.520.1587
ltracey@affordablehousingconference.org

www.affordablehousingconference.org

Nationally respected, well known and engaging guest speakers, including Administration representatives, local, state and federal elected and appointed officials, are expected to participate in the 2010 Annual Summit on **May 3, 2010**. Award presentations for AHCMC's "Break the Barrier to Home Ownership" contest, the "Excellence In Achitectural Designs" contest, and the prestigious "Paul Sarbanes Excellence in Community Service" will round out an inspirational, informative, provocative and networking event.

TRANSPORTATION

We strongly recommend taking Metro's Red Line to the White Flint Metro Station; cross Rockville Pike underground to reach the conference center. If you drive, there is free parking at the conference center.

Buyers Ready to Close on Montgomery County's First Workforce Housing at King Farm in Rockville

A mix of County Employees including firefighters, and both college and public school educators are among the first buyers to enter into contracts at The Village at King Farm, Montgomery County's first workforce housing project in Rockville, Maryland. First closings are anticipated prior to year end.

The prices of the two- and three-bedroom duplexes (some with dens and all with 2 ½ baths) range from \$206,700 to \$377,400 among three income ranges. Workforce housing is targeted to serve households earning between 70 percent and 120 percent of the Washington DC area median income, currently over \$100,000.

The Village at King Farm consists of 49 two-level condominiums within four of the seven buildings that comprise King Farm Village Center. The Village Center is a 120,000 square foot neighborhood retail center anchored by a Safeway supermarket and is within walking distance to all King Farm residents. Condominiums are on the upper two floors of three-story buildings while the ground floor is occupied by various neighborhood retail stores. The top floor of the fourth building is home to a community room, fitness center and individual tenant storage lockers.

In March of 2008, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) worked together to purchase The Village at King Farm (then a rental community known as the Village Center Apartments) under the County's right of first refusal rules. HOC is acting as the developer, renovating and converting the apartments to workforce housing condominiums. A portion of the units are set aside for Rockville City and Montgomery County employees.

More than 600 prospective purchasers have expressed an interest in purchasing a workforce condominium at The Village at King Farm. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the sales office at 301.740.8888 or by registering through property's website, www.TheVillageAtKingFarm.com.

Statement on Purple Line

Ralph Bennett, speaking about Purple Line Now, 10.21.09

I am Ralph Bennett; I represent the Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County and the Board of Purple Line Now. The Conference consists of housing advocates who sponsor three events each year to stimulate interest in affordable housing in Montgomery County and to provide occasions where advocates and providers meet for education, advocacy and networking.

We are enthusiastically in favor of the Purple Line and believe it is long overdue.

The ability to afford housing relates to the cost of living and, while convention suggests that no one should spend more than a third of their gross income for housing, we know that many families in the region who will be served by the Purple Line pay much more than that, just for housing.

Transportation typically consumes another 15% to 20% of such families' total budgets and is essential for access to employment.

At current prices, Metrobus costs \$8.00 per day from College Park to Bethesda and back, a total of \$2,000 for a year. Good price – poor service – the trip takes an hour and a half, leaving the car as the only viable alternative - at least for now. Car ownership costs between \$6,000 and \$7,000 per year – 3 or 4 times the cost of public transportation.

According to the PurpleLineMD website, the trip from College Park to Bethesda will take 48 minutes with the middle investment option - half the time of the bus. Since time is money, this means an added one and a half hours per day for activities other than riding on transit.

Alternatives to bus and car are clearly needed for the region for the 21st century – many American cities have shown that light rail is the answer - it clearly is for this one.

The convenience and low use cost of light rail are obvious and overdue for all of us, but the benefits will most dramatically affect the lives of our lower income neighbors who now commute to work and school around the Beltway.

Please add the Purple Line to the region's long range plan - or short range plan - or could we build it tomorrow?

On May 8, 2009 the Conference organized its 18th annual Summit, "A New Day for Affordable Housing: Reasons for Optimism." The summit was held at the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center, in North Bethesda, MD. Opening remarks were provided by Council President Phil Andrews, DHCD Secretary Ray Skinner and Anirban Basu, Chairman of Sage Policy Group. Basu, an economist, has worked closely with State of Maryland officials on economic matters. Congressman Chris Van Hollen introduced the Luncheon Keynote speaker, Carol J. Galante, the new Deputy Assistant Secretary at HUD. Galante was previously the president of San Francisco-based Bridge Housing and is well known for developing affordable mixed-income and transit friendly housing. County Executive Ike Leggett also provided remarks and was the Master of Ceremonies for the Conference's luncheon awards ceremony which includes the Paul Sarbanes Community Service Award, Chevy Chase Bank Architectural Awards and "Break the Barrier to Home Ownership" closing cost assistance awards. Over 400 participants attended this day of information, inspiration and determination, which also included eight panel presentations by eight moderators and 25 local/regional affordable housing experts.



Keynote speaker Carol Galante, HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary



County Executive Ike Leggett with Eugene Ford, Sr., winner of the Paul Sarbanes Excellence in Community Service Award

The break-out panels were focused on: 1) Affordable Housing Near Transit; 2) Local Faith-based initiatives; 3) Foreclosure Updates; 4) Green Housing Initiatives; 5) Local Advocacy Works; 6) Investment Strategies in Today's Uncertain Environment; 7) Stimulus Package Benefits; and 8) the Resurgence of Rental Housing. These housing experts provided excellent case study examples and pertinent advice on a number of critical affordable housing issues affecting Montgomery County, MD and the surrounding region.



Resurgence of Rental Housing panelists: Toby Bozzuto, Jim Willis, and Annie Alston

White Flint Master Plan

Sally Roman, Commissioner with the Housing Opportunities Commission, speaking about the White Flint Draft Sector Plan, October 20, 2009.

Like the Planning Board's draft Growth Policy, the proposed White Flint Sector Plan, Midtown on the Pike, is bold and innovative. HOC's interest in the plan arises, of course, from our mission to create affordable housing. Overall, HOC applauds the positive approach this draft offers to affordable housing. We are also glad to see the emphasis on housing in general and on a better balance of housing and jobs as a goal. In addition, HOC is a property owner in the Sector Plan area. Naturally we are concerned with the development potential of our property, Strathmore Court.

Consequently, HOC would like to comment specifically on several aspects of the Plan:

1. We are pleased that this draft recommends zoning for our Strathmore Court property that is consistent with its location near Metro and the recommendations for its neighbors. While we have no plans to redevelop at this time, we believe it is prudent to provide for that opportunity in the future.

2. The section on affordable housing is very positive, and there are other useful recommendations scattered throughout the Plan. We are concerned, however, that the draft appears to consider MPDUs, workforce housing units, and development on publicly owned or controlled land as the only sources of affordable units. These are very important, of course, but even where land is very expensive, HOC and non-profit housing providers occasionally have opportunities to produce units on privately owned land. We believe it would offer useful guidance for the future to specifically support this possibility.

3. We are delighted that this Plan seeks to improve the balance of jobs and housing in the area but regret that the balance it proposes is still more heavily weighted toward jobs. As the I-270/Rockville Pike area is increasingly built out, transit station areas will undoubtedly be the primary source of housing to allow future employees to live near their jobs. As such, we urge you to seek even more opportunities to provide housing at White Flint, especially affordable housing. This housing could serve not only the jobs at White Flint but those elsewhere in the corridor, especially in Gaithersburg West.

4. HOC also hopes that the degree of flexibility in land uses offered by the proposed CR Zone and the way the proposed zone is applied in this Plan will not impede achievement of the desired housing units in the area. We are concerned that the proposed zone may not result in the 60 percent residential/40 percent commercial development goal for the Sector Plan area. It appears that all of the individual properties are allowed at least 50 percent commercial floor area, many up to 80 percent. If the market goes back to preferring commercial development, there does not seem to be a mechanism for preventing an imbalance.

5. We support the proposal to exclude affordable housing units from the calculation of staging capacity if they are provided under CR Zone incentives and exceed the MPDU law requirements.

MetroPointe at Wheaton Metro Named Mixed-Income Project of the Year

MetroPointe at Wheaton Metro, a mid-rise mixed-use apartment community located in Wheaton, Maryland, was named "Mixed Income Project of the Year" by Multifamily Executive Magazine at the 2009 MFE and Developer Awards ceremony in Las Vegas.

MetroPointe was co-developed by Bozzuto Development Company and the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) and is owned by HOC. The Class-A apartment community consists of 173 studio, one, two, and three-bedroom apartments, of which 53

are income-restricted units. The project delivered in September 2008 and is located directly above the Wheaton Metro station.

"This is a unique apartment community. MetroPointe accomplishes the county's goal of smart growth, workforce housing and deep affordability for the County's lowest income residents, all in one community. It is smart growth at its very best," said Michael J. Kator, Chair, Housing Opportunities Commission. "Having Bozzuto as our development partner helped make this goal a reality."

"We are honored to have been involved in the creation of the nation's best mixed-income project," said Tom Bozzuto. "MetroPointe embodies our commitment to providing our community with transit-oriented, urban infill, affordable housing."

HOC and Neighborhood Stabilization

HOC is partnering with the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) to purchase and renovate foreclosed or abandoned homes and add them to the County's inventory of affordable rental homes.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program is to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of home values of neighboring homes. NSP is part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008.



HOC's first purchase in Gaithersburg with Neighborhood Stabilization funds.

"In a truly tough economy, this year's winners not only showcase the talent and creativity of the multifamily industry but also the business acumen required to build projects capable of revitalizing communities," said Rachel Z. Azoff, managing editor of Multifamily Executive Magazine. "We were truly impressed and humbled by the scope of the work, the designs, and the overall developments this year."

The community offers direct elevator access to the Wheaton Metro, a fitness center with children's play area, a business center with computers, a fax machine and a copier, a clubroom, two landscaped courtyards, and community center for an after-school program and other resident services administered and managed through HOC.

For more information, visit www.metropointeapts.com.

HOC Receives Economic Stimulus Bill Funds

HOC received approximately \$3 million to renovate and rehabilitate its stock of public housing in Montgomery County. The funds came to HOC as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment (ARRA) Act that was signed into law by President Obama in February 2009.

The intent of ARRA is to stimulate the nation's economy by putting more people to work. Every housing authority in the nation (provided they are in good standing with HUD) has been given funds to improve their public housing properties.



One of HOC's public housing homes that is located in a development in Germantown. Known as a "scattered site" public housing unit, this townhome is an MPDU (Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit) that was purchased by HOC in 1983. It needed a new washer and dryer, new kitchen cabinets and new fixtures in the bathrooms.

Work on HOC's public housing is underway. Many of the 1,547 apartments, townhomes and single family homes in HOC's public housing portfolio are more than 20—and often 30—years old. Many of the homes are in need of kitchen and bath renovation, roof replacement and energy efficiency enhancements such as window and door replacements.

An HOC ARRA website (linked to the homepage of the HOC website: <http://www.hocmc.org>) reports to the public how HOC is spending the money. The website links to RFPs that have been issued and tracks the projects that are receiving the stimulus funds.



The New “American Dream” – Affordable Homes for Owners and Renters

The “American Dream” is evolving – soaring foreclosure rates and families struggling to stay in their homes have resulted in the nation weighing the benefits of homeownership with the clear risks.

How did we get here? Part of the answer is an unregulated mortgage market that allowed subprime and adjustable rate mortgages to provide short-term homeownership opportunities but long-term problems for families that faced job losses or simply could not afford the loan over time. Decades of homeownership focused housing policies paired with the burst of the housing bubble also played a significant role.

The next and most important question that needs to be addressed at the local, state and federal levels is: Where do we go from here? First and foremost, the federal government must develop policies that protect consumers, require disclosure of lending practices, and offer effective homeownership counseling before and after a home is purchased.

These affordable homeownership strategies, however, also need to be balanced with the recognition on the part of policymakers that tens of millions of families call rental housing home. A strong policy infrastructure centered on supporting rental housing overall, as well as affordable rental housing for low- to moderate-income families, in particular, is necessary.

An essential part of this balance between homeownership and rental policies is to cement increased cooperation between integral U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs and agencies. This includes increased collaboration on policies associated with the Federal Housing Administration’s affordable mortgage loans, the HOME Program grants awarded each year at the state and local levels for building and preserving affordable rental units or owner-occupied homes, and the Community Development Block Grant program.

Federal policymakers must break down the barriers and inconsistencies that exist between these HUD programs while at the same time creating a healthy and critical balance between affordable homeownership and rental housing strategies so that our policies better meet the wide-ranging needs of families nationwide. Leadership at the local level is also important to helping ensure the availability of rental housing through land use zoning and coordinated planning.

In addition, we need to rework homeownership policies to minimize risk and to help ensure that families fully understand the related financial risks and responsibilities. This must be balanced with reforming affordable rental housing subsidy pro-

grams like Section 8, which must better support self-sufficiency and asset development for those renters who may, or may not, one day want to become homeowners.

For families that live in public rental housing, HUD’s public housing portfolio needs to be reconnected with the rest of the world of real estate as modeled by the HOPE VI program. The HOPE VI program, and its proposed successor the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, focuses in part on reducing concentrated poverty through the creation of affordable mixed-income communities. These mixed-income rental communities are a vital piece of the affordability puzzle that will help to eliminate some of the stigma that has often been associated with affordable rental housing.

These significant and more collaborative policy steps cannot only help ensure affordable housing for owners and renters in the future, but will help balance overall perceptions about what constitutes the “American Dream.” After all, home is still the center of family and community life whether a family rents or owns.

This column was written for “The Tennessean” by Conrad Egan, president and CEO of the National Housing Conference in Washington, DC



The Seide family, 2009 closing cost winners in front of their new home in Clarksburg, MD



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The mission of the Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County is to bring elected officials, housing and community development leaders, business professionals, activists and other community members together to address affordable housing issues and seek solutions. The Conference's annual summit draws more than 300 participants to hear expert panelists and speakers. The Conference also organizes public/private sector Roundtables and other special events to highlight the need to create and preserve affordable housing in Montgomery County, MD.

Community Benefits and Services:

1. Manage all needs associated with the Conference being the pre-eminent forum for affordable housing professionals in the County that provides a unique opportunity for advocacy, education, and networking.
2. Showcase the efforts of all affordable housing agencies and supporters, providing recognition and publicity for architects, builders, developers, lenders and realtors via website, print materials, community events and organizing Montgomery County's annual Affordable Housing Summit.
3. Provide down-payment and closing cost assistance through the Conference's "Break the Barrier to Home Ownership" program. About \$25,000 is raised through donations from individuals and corporate entities each year.



Yes, I want to be a 2010 member of the Affordable Housing Conference, and make housing affordable for all Montgomery County residents.

Individual

___\$50

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___\$125 (2 employees)

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Contact Lise Tracey, 301 520 1587,
for more information. Register online for the
May 3, 2010 Affordable Housing Summit
at www.affordablehousingconference.org.

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It is our belief that decent, safe and affordable housing for all Americans is an inalienable right and not a privilege. We are proud that numerous affordable housing issues have been addressed and solved through collaborative efforts by **The Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County, Maryland (AHC MC)** and its housing partners over the past 20 years of AHC MC's existence. However, Montgomery County still needs more affordable housing units especially for low-to-moderate income individuals, families and seniors. We know the current economic environment has been difficult for many and new foreclosures are exacerbating the affordable housing crisis. Yet, we are proud that AHC MC continues to be successful due to the generous financial support of donors in the public, private, corporate and nonprofit sectors of Montgomery County and the surrounding region. Please join us in our efforts. If you can make a donation to help support our 2010 educational, outreach and advocacy efforts contact **Lise Tracey**, our executive director, at **301-520-1587** or **ltracey@affordablehousingconference.org**.

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