

**TESTIMONY OF ANGIE RODGERS, CONSULTANT TO THE  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE (NVAHA)**

**TO THE ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**FY 2012 ADVERTISED TAX RATE HEARING**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2011**

Chairman Zimmerman and members of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Angie Rodgers and I am speaking on behalf of the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance. The Alliance is a broad-based regional organization that supports public policies that promote the preservation and new construction of affordable housing choices in Arlington and throughout Northern Virginia for households of all incomes.

I stand, along with our many community-, civic- and faith-based partners, to urge the Board to advertise a maximum tax rate that provides enough flexibility to allow for a full dialogue about community priorities in the upcoming budget process. We applaud the board for being one of the only jurisdictions in the region in the last budget cycle to increase taxes in order to support a greater investment in the safety net of support services for Arlington's most vulnerable residents; we also appreciate the efforts by the County Manager and her team in this proposed budget to include increases in investment in housing grants, supportive housing and emergency needs.

By all accounts, however, the needs that we will consider this year have grown deeper and more complex than in the previous year. Arlington faces:

- a proposed county budget that is already lean from years of cuts to social and other services;
- federal and state budgets that likely pose severe cuts to domestic programs;
- exhaustion of federal stimulus dollars that have been a crucial source of support in past two years; and
- specifically for the nonprofit housing developers and providers with whom we work most closely, a lack of developer contributions to support the preservation and creation of affordable housing capacity.

Arlington faces these challenges at the same time that it has committed to:

- creation of at least 400 committed affordable units [CAFs] each year;
- a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, which needs consistent investment in both housing and support services in order to progress; and
- preservation of thousands of units of affordable housing opportunities along Columbia Pike, among other priorities.

We need some flexibility over revenue in order to consider these efforts in earnest. For this reason, we recommend that you advertise a maximum rate that is 2 cents higher than the current rate. We look forward to the subsequent conversation about potential increased investments in all of the tools that will help Arlington meet its human needs goals, including increases in the Affordable Housing Investment Fund, housing grants, and funding to the Department of Human Services and nonprofit service providers for case management and supportive services.