



Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County

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# REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

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**Chelsea Andrews**  
President

March 06, 2024

# HOC AT-A-GLANCE: February 2024

## February highlights:

- Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center Grand Opening
- HOC in the News
- Legislative Updates
- Highlights from our Resident Services Division
- Updates from our Housing Resource Division
- Real Estate Development activities



# SSRAC Ribbon Cutting:

## Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center (SSRAC)

- HOC was well-represented at the **Feb. 24.** SSRAC ribbon cutting
- HOC is the developer and owner of the property featuring:
  - Eight-lane competition pool
  - Multi-purpose therapy pool/spa
  - Fitness area equipped with gymnasium, weight room, etc.
  - Movement and dance studios
  - Multipurpose activity rooms
  - Public use and social spaces
  - Culinary arts kitchen
  - Holy Cross Hospital affiliated Wellness Center
  - Extension of the Capital Crescent Trail



## HOC IN THE NEWS:

### Urban Oasis

- Fox 5 TV declared Elizabeth Square an “unprecedented urban oasis” in **Feb. 9** on-air report about the SSRAC ribbon cutting

### Public Housing for Everyone?

- Vox **Feb. 10** article cites HOC and Housing Production Fund as the future of affordable housing development



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: Federal

- **Smith-Wyden:** Tax bill that would expand LIHTC passed the House in late January but seems to have stalled in the Senate.
- **Budget:** Congress passed a Continuing Resolution extending HUD funding until March 8.
- Senate and House appropriations leaders on March 3 revealed a bipartisan agreement on first set of funding bills. The HUD budget is very positive, providing more funding for Housing Choice Vouchers than either the previously proposed Senate or House bills, which were estimated to result in a reduction of 80,000-120,000 vouchers nationwide.
- The new federal budget bill closes that gap and funds 3,000 new special purpose vouchers.
- The Public Housing Capital Fund, PBRA and other programs would receive modest increases, while some other programs including HOME would see cuts.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

## State

- **HB7:** Del. Vaughn Stewart's bill to create a statewide Housing Innovation Fund modeled on the HPF passed the House Environment & Transportation Committee on March 1, and is scheduled on the House floor March 5. Amendments adopted in Committee would:
  - Provide \$15 million in FY25 and \$5 million/year for the next four years
  - Allow any government entity to apply for funds (not just PHAs)
  - Provide that if funds are not committed within one year, they are automatically sent to Rental Housing Works
  - Provide that funding should be used for three projects in three separate jurisdictions

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

## County

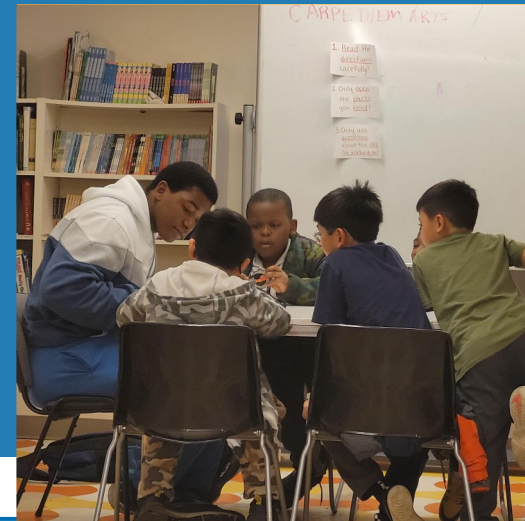
- **Budget:** The PHP Committee approved HOC's Capital Budget request and it is scheduled to go before the full Council on March 12. The County Executive's proposed Operating Budget will be released March 15
- **Non-Profit Preservation Fund:** Special Appropriation to release the first \$20 million was introduced Feb. 27; Public Hearing is scheduled for March 19
- **ZTA 23-10:** Bill to remove parking minimums near transit is scheduled for final action March 5
- **Bill 7-24:** Councilmember Kate Stewart plans to introduce Bill 7-24 - Tenant Protection and Notification on March 5. The bill was inspired by the fire at Arrive Apartments and would require more detailed information about fire systems and fire plans to be included in residential leases and require notice to tenants of planned maintenance

# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming

### Resident Well Being

- Activities for Youth
  - After-School / Out-of-School Programs: SON facilitated Safe Zones at Cider Mill, focusing on helping the 30 participants obtain and retain jobs





# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

### Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
  - **HOC Academy/Youth Enrichment Series (YES):** After school clubs at Georgian Court, Tanglewood, Town Center Place and Washington Square include Robotics & Science with Mad Science and nutrition, health and arts with Carpe Diem Arts



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

### Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
  - **Feb. 5:** After School Program staff intro and overview was held for Washington Square/Camp Hill parents
  - **Feb. 9:** Tanglewood Apartments residents enjoyed a Valentine's Day celebration
  - **Feb. 26:** Residents young and old at McGruder's Discovery gathered for lively games of "Love Bingo" (*Pictured right*)



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

### Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors:**
  - **Feb. 8 and 21:** Fitness activities were conducted at Waverly House and Bauer Park by Arts for the Aging
  - **Feb. 8:** Forest Oak Towers enjoyed Disney on Ice at Baltimore's CFG Bank Arena
  - **Feb. 9:** Valentine's Day and Birthday Pizza Party delighted Willow Manor at Clopper's Mill residents (*Pictured right*)



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

### Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors:**
  - **Feb. 8 & 21:** “Warming Up Your Winter” conducted by Arts for the Aging (AFTA) energized Bauer Park residents



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

### Resident Well Being

- **Health and Wellness Activities:**
  - **Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27:** Students in the Chamberlain University Community Nursing Clinical Rotation visited Willow Manor at Fair Hill Farm and hosted fitness and wellness workshops
  - **Feb. 14:** The Jewish Council on Aging conducted an information session at Residences on The Lane



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming

- **Relocation and Re-Certification Assistance:**
  - Assisted customers on an ongoing basis with relocations and other needs for RAD and renovation projects at Residences on the Lane, Stewartown Homes, Shady Grove Apartments, Willow Manor Apartments, Bauer Park, Town Center Olney, Sandy Spring, Willow Manor and Georgian Court

# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

### Food Assistance:

- Provided food and other resources to hundreds of residents at multiple events in conjunction with Manna Food Center, Emmanuel Brinklow Seventh Day Adventist Church, Capital Area Food Bank's Senior Brown Bag, Nourish Bethesda and My Groceries To Go programs
- Manna Food hosted a produce Pop-Up Shop **Feb. 26** for the Tobytown community and provided Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program application assistance
- Facilitated the Senior Nutrition Program, which provides meals and nutrition education for seniors in a congregate setting



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Resident Advisory Board (RAB)

- Commissioner Kelleher, RAB members and HOC Staff attended the 2024 Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition advocacy event in Annapolis on **Feb. 16** and met with delegates and discussing Gov. Wes Moore's new statewide housing initiatives





# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy Coach continued counseling customers about money

- Provided one-on-one coaching to **23** HOC customers and **seven** individuals from the Housing Path Wait List
- Facilitated financial literacy workshops



# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Supportive Services

- Program **served 343 participants** by conducting home visits with program participants, providing case management services, and paying rent and utilities.
- Continued to help Emergency Voucher recipients secure housing by providing housing location services, as well as financial assistance for application fees, security deposits, moving expenses and household items.
- Program staff continued to implement the Rent Supplement Program (RSP), which provides a shallow rental subsidy (up to \$600 monthly) to county residents, including a large number of seniors on fixed incomes. **280 residents participated** in the program.

# RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

## Fatherhood Initiative

- Cohort 29 has begun with **28** fathers enrolled
- **Feb. 23:** The program graduated **21** fathers from the February cohort



# HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

## Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

- Program utilization is a strong 98%, exceeding the target rate of 95%.
- Currently, **99 families** with issued vouchers are searching for suitable homes to rent, **180 contracts** are pending execution and **300 families** were selected from the HCV Wait List last month.
- During February, the Division received **seven** requests for a voucher extension beyond the initial 90-day period.



# HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

## RENTCafé Supporting Online Annual Recertifications

- Overall, **440** of **756** customers submitted paperwork electronically
- **Ninety-three (93)** customers were recommended for program termination effective Feb. 1. The Resident Services Division worked in collaboration with the Housing Resources Division to assess client needs and to determine why recertifications were not being completed.
- Resident Services Counselors assisted **49** families with the recertification requirement and overturned the termination. Termination proceedings will continue for **44** families for the following reasons:
  - 43 – Failed to respond to counselor outreach
  - 1 – Admitted to a nursing home

# HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

## Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs)

- HOC has an allocation of **118** Emergency Housing Vouchers
- **One-hundred thirteen (113)** families have successfully leased homes
- **Three (3)** families have ported to other jurisdictions
- **Two (2)** families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable homes to rent
- Staff are reviewing **six** certification packets to determine program eligibility
- HOC requested **nine** additional referrals from HHS



# HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

## Family Self Sufficiency (FSS)

- Current enrollment stands at **366 participants**
- **Two (2)** FSS graduates achieved their goals
- FSS graduates have increased their annual income by more than \$23,000
- FSS staff partnered with The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program to host a February Income Tax Preparation workshop



# REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:

Property / Update

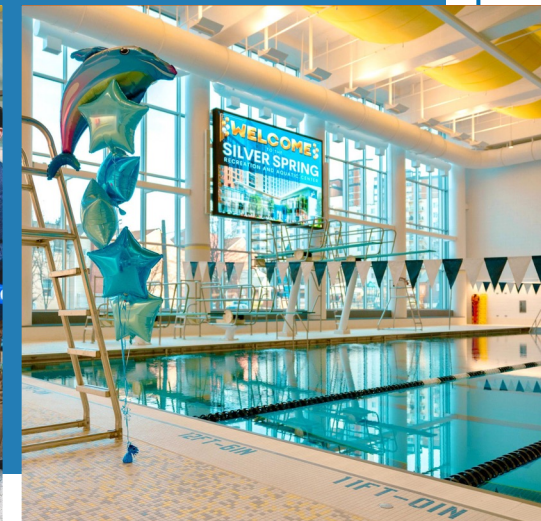
## Ivory Prize

- The Housing Production Fund was selected at Top 25 finalist out of more than 500 entries
- In April, \$300,000 in grants will be awarded to winners in three categories of Construction & Design, Finance, and Policy & Regulatory Reform

## SSRAC Grand Opening

- **Feb. 24:** ribbon cutting event for grand opening of the Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center

**TOP 25** | Ivory Prize  
Top 25  
Finalists  
Announced





# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THE END

