

MOUNT VERNON VOICE

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Staff photo/Steve Hunt

Our Special Harbor at Lee District Park is a water park that offers a special time for everyone, including those with disabilities. See more of what there is to enjoy there on page 8.

County Can Regulate All Short-term Rentals

By STEVE HUNT
Staff Writer

Mount Vernon residents are increasingly taking advantage of web-based companies such as AirBnB to rent out their homes on a short term basis — and many of their neighbors aren't happy about it.

To address the issue, Fairfax County is considering the development of new zoning regulations for short-term rentals that may address such factors as

where these rentals would be allowed, how often could they be rented out, what types of properties could be rented out and how many people would be allowed to stay in a property at any one time.

Last year, Del. Paul Krizek (D-44th) wrote about the "gig economy" and how many

people are using web-based companies such as Uber and other to earn extra income and highlighted the specific challenge posed by web-based short-term rentals, like AirBnB.

Krizek noted that this year the General Assembly passed a law that affirms that local governments, such as Fairfax County, have the authority to address zoning and regulatory issues regarding short-term rentals.

The law went into effect on July 1 "and at that point the county can start

the process to regulate short-term rentals," Krizek stated.

"Fairfax County staff believe that there are upward of 1,000 units offered as short-term rentals throughout the county, and that number is likely to grow with the proliferation of online platforms such as AirBnB, FlipKey, Roomarama and HomeAway," Krizek said. "These rental units range in size from a single room within a home to an entire home with multiple bedrooms."

Krizek said that in today's digital world, one of the many challenges being faced is how to manage short-term rentals by "balancing the desire of some to utilize their

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"Few people want the home next door to become a mini-hotel or bed and breakfast."

— Del. Paul Krizek, (D-44th)

Nonprofits Explain Missions to Chamber

By STEVE HUNT
Staff Writer

The Mount Vernon-Lee area is blessed to have numerous non-profit organizations, all dedicated to assisting the residents living primarily along the Richmond Highway corridor, who do not compete against each other but instead complement each other's various missions.

Thursday, representatives from five of these charities — Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, Habitat for Humanity Northern Virginia, MVLE, Inc., New Hope Housing and United Community Ministries explained what their respective organizations do to improve the quality of life for low-income residents at the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce monthly business breakfast at the Belle Haven Country Club.

Alison DeCoursey, the new executive director at UCM, began her remarks saying that she is excited about UCM's re-engagement with the chamber and gave a brief history of the organization.

UCM was founded 48 years ago as a grassroots community organization by several faith communities to empower families. See Nonprofits Page 10



Staff photo/Steve Hunt

From left, Pam Michell, executive director of New Hope Housing, Jon Smoot, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia, Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce Chairman Jane Gandee, April Pinch-Keeler, President and CEO of MVLE, Inc., David Levine, President/CEO of Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, and Alison DeCoursey executive director of United Community Ministries. See Sandburg Page 10

Former Sandburg Principal Charged in April 4 Incident

Terrence Yarborough, a former principal at Sandburg Middle School, has been charged with misdemeanor assault and battery following an incident on April 4 at the school, Fairfax County police reported.

According to police, a female student who was 12-years-old at the time, was in the cafeteria with a few friends.

Yarborough, 53, of Woodbridge, came into the cafeteria and asked the girl to pick something up off the floor and she refused, police reported. He asked her again and she said no a second time.

"Yarborough then allegedly smacked the girl on her buttocks," police stated.

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Police Charge Former Sandburg MS Principal

Sandburg from Page 1

The victim left the cafeteria and reported the incident to a teacher. The school resource officer, Fairfax County Public Schools authorities and Child Protective Services were notified and an investigation began. Yarborough was removed from the school and placed on administrative leave.

Parallel investigations were conducted by police and FCPS internal affairs. On July 10, a criminal summons was obtained and on Monday Yarborough came to the Mount Vernon District police station where the summons was served. He was released and is scheduled to appear in Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations

Court on Aug. 4. The Washington Post reported that Yarborough was put on administrative leave on April 4, immediately after the allegations were made. He did not return to the school and resigned on June 30. A FCPS spokesperson told the Post that the district would decide whether to ask the state to revoke his administrator and teaching licenses

after the criminal case concludes. Prior to being hired as principal at Sandburg in 2010, Yarborough, who worked for FCPS since 2005, was an assistant principal at Hayfield and Robinson secondary schools. Yarborough told the Post Tuesday that the charge was "unexpected," saying that the incident involved "a simple playing

around" interaction after he asked the student to pick up paper. She said no and got "smart alecky," he told the Post. "That was typical of her. We continued to joke. I said, 'Girl, if you don't pick that up, I'm going to spank you.'" Yarborough said he then "gave her one swat to the rear end with the flick of my wrist."

— Staff report

Area Nonprofits Discuss Their Goals and Needs

Nonprofits from Page 1

lies, children and adults to create better futures for themselves. Back then, it had a budget of \$7,000, a staff of one, and numerous dedicated volunteers.

Today, with a budget of \$4.5 million and more than 60 employees, UCM serves an average of 7,000 to 8,000 unduplicated residents each year, 40 percent of whom are children, and is the only agency offering comprehensive, continuum-of-care human services in southeastern Fairfax County.

"Our clients are working poor families," said DeCoursey. "Seventy-five percent living at or below the federal poverty level — an annual income of \$24,600 for a family of four.

"They struggle with financial challenges and the high cost of housing and limited access to living-wage employment," she added.

She also cited some startling facts: while the county is one of the wealthiest in the country, in UCM's service area there more than 15,000 people living under the poverty level; Fairfax County has the highest number of people in Virginia who are "food insecure" — meaning they aren't sure where their next meal is going to come from — and along the Route 1 corridor there are numerous communities which are designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as food deserts, an area with limited access to nutri-

tious foods. In addition, 46 percent of households in Hybla Valley are experiencing "liquid asset poverty," meaning that they cannot subsist even at the poverty level for a period of three months. In contrast, only 3.4 percent of households in Belle Haven are considered in liquid asset poverty.

"These are very significant challenges, but these are challenges UCM is prepared to take on," DeCoursey said.

Good Shepherd Housing has been developing and maintaining affordable rental housing for area households, mainly working with families with small children for whom fair market rents are out of their reach for 44 years, said President and CEO David Levine.

Good Shepherd Housing units are located in more than 20 properties from Huntington to Lorton.

"Name a rental or condominium community along the highway, and odds are Good Shepherd Housing owns or leases one of our 90 rental units in there for one of our families," Levine said.

Levine explained that the need for affordable housing in the area is considerable, noting that there are more than 10,000 working families in south county who are struggling to afford sustainable

and permanent rental housing. "So for every single affordable rental unit in the area, there are two low-income working families in need of that housing," he said.

"Name a rental or condominium community along the highway, and odds are Good Shepherd Housing owns or leases one of our 90 rental units in there for one of our families."

— David Levine

And why does demand outstrip supply?

The answer, says Levine, is because "rents are too high and incomes are too low."

For those who may not know, Levine asked who in the crowd knew how much the average rent is in the county. The answer is \$1,700.

And to be able to afford that rent, a household must earn \$70,000 annually.

However, he pointed out that 45 percent of the jobs in the country pay less than \$50,000/year which includes 300,000 jobs in the business services, retail, hospitality, health care and education sectors.

"Our housing solves a small part of that need for affordable housing," Levine said. "We make our rental housing affordable, support the residents in our housing with integrated case management services, and help them reach self-sufficiency. That means we help them become stable in their housing for the long term."

New Hope Housing was founded 40 years ago as Route One Corridor Housing by Eleanor Kennedy, for whom the Kennedy Shelter, located on Route 1 near Fort Belvoir's Tully gate, is named, said executive director Pam Michell.

Starting with a four-bedroom farmhouse that could sleep eight people, New Hope Housing has grown into an \$8 million organi-

zation with 120 staff which provides beds for 350 people each night in the county and the City of Alexandria.

"It has grown way beyond what Eleanor Kennedy envisioned," Michell said.

And Michell commented that New Hope Housing's long-time tag line: "It's time to rethink homelessness" remains as appropriate as ever.

In addition to the Kennedy shelter, New Hope Housing operates five other shelters — the Mondloch House which provides shelter for single adults who are chronically homeless, the Alexandria Community Shelter, the Falls Church Homeless Shelter, an Emergency Overflow Unit at the Kennedy Shelter, and the Ventures in Community Hypothermia Outreach Program during the winter at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church.

Michell explained that over the decades New Hope Housing has shifted its mission from being "shelter focused" to "housing focused," noting that providing temporary shelter is simply a tool that leads to permanent housing.

Michell added that at New Hope Housing "we welcome the unwelcome" meaning that they will assist anyone coming through their doors needing help, ranging from those down on their luck who have lost their home to felons just getting out of prison who have nowhere else to turn.

"We offer hope," said Michell.

Clients in New Hope Housing programs range in age from infants to 84 years old and more than 200 families in the county and 100 in the city have moved from shelters to permanent housing, she said.

Michell also noted that a \$12 million bond referendum will be on the ballot this November to fund the renovation of the Ken-

neddy Shelter, which is located in a building that is about 100 years old.

Michell added that for New Hope Housing to be able to continue on its mission to end homelessness, "we are dependent on you to help us thrive."

April Pinch-Keeler, president and CEO of MVLE, Inc., said that they operate three community and employment centers in the county where those with disabilities can come either to simply play cards or go on field trips such as to museums and the Kennedy Center, or get assistance in finding a job.

Just because the people they serve have disabilities doesn't mean they don't want the same things as everyone else, she said.

MVLE serves more than 450 people each day, and those that find employment through MVLE are dedicated workers who are committed to their jobs. She suggested going to youtube to see MVLE videos to see the things they do.

"Our mission is to create futures, one person at a time," Pinch-Keeler said.

Jon Smoot, executive director of Habitat for Humanity Northern Virginia, said Habitat for Humanity is the 10th largest new home building in the country.

And Habitat for Humanity Northern Virginia is the only affordable for sale home builder in northern Virginia, he added.

Smoot said that northern Virginia is experiencing an affordable housing crisis and that the workforce is projected to grow by 40,000 by 2030 which will require additional affordable housing units.

"It's just not happening," he said. "Alexandria, Fairfax County, and Arlington are way behind."

And the reason says Smoot — "a lack of political will."

He also encouraged chamber members and guests to "be an advocate" for affordable housing and contact their supervisor.



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