

# Moving Downward, Growing Upward

We are pleased to announce that the Housing Corporation of Arlington is relocating! We are moving into offices on the ground floor of our current address, 20 Academy Street. This space will include a waiting area, a kitchenette and offices for David & Joanna, allowing HCA room to grow as we move forward.

We hope that you will help us celebrate our move by donating any items from the following “Wish List” for our new, improved space! Please call or email Joanna at 781-316-3606 or jain@housingcorporarlington.org and let her know what you would like to contribute. And don’t forget to stop by and visit us this fall!

- Bookshelves
  - Desks
  - Plants
  - Desk Lamps
  - Floor Lamps
  - 2 Comfortable Chairs
  - Small Square Coffee Table
  - Small Refrigerator
- Coffee Maker
  - Small Microwave
  - Conference Table
  - Conference Chairs
  - White Board
  - Bulletin Board
  - Office Garbage Cans
  - Recycling Cans

.....

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



## Housing Corporation of Arlington

20 Academy Street Arlington, MA 02476 • t: 781-316-3429 • f: 781-641-2103

**Board of Directors**  
Debby Lewis  
*President*  
  
Paul Parravano  
*Vice-President*  
  
Marc Dohan  
*Treasurer*  
  
Jan Blodgett  
*Clerk*  
  
Gregory Bowe  
Jack Cooper  
Mary Doyle  
Monique Magliozzi  
Neal Mongold  
Mary Lou Vest  
Laura Wiener

**Executive Director**  
David J. Levy

**Outreach Coordinator**  
Joanna A. Ain

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOSTON MA  
PERMIT NO. 233



# Taking steps for affordable housing...

## Housing Corporation of Arlington

20 Academy Street Arlington, MA 02476

www.housingcorporarlington.org

V.6 • Fall 2007

## What to Do with Chapter 40B

Letter from the Director

*Dear Friends:*

HCA members and supporters may be following the most recent debate regarding the future of Chapter 40B, the Commonwealth’s so-called “anti-snob” zoning law. Opponents are denouncing the law as “developer welfare” along with other not so thinly disguised NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) attitudes. While Chapter 40B certainly has its shortcomings and should be reformed to better protect local interests, now is not the time throw to this baby out with its affordable bathwater.

Generally speaking, Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws allows real estate developers to override local zoning bylaws if they set aside 25% or more of the housing units created to be affordable to households earning up to 80% of the median income, almost \$60k for a family of three in the Boston area. Communities can turn away 40B developments if at least 10% of their housing meets the Commonwealth’s definition of affordable or if they have made recent progress on affordable housing. Because many communities maintain restrictive zoning (such as requiring a minimum lot size of one or two acres on which to build one home), which effectively prohibits the development of affordable, multifamily housing, 40B remains a relevant and useful tool for affordable housing production.

It is well-established that wages in the United States are not keeping pace with

rising living expenses, especially in the Northeast and on the West Coast. Families at the median income level cannot purchase a home in most communities in Massachusetts. For low-income working families, the cost of housing causes instability in every part of their lives. Here in Arlington, a single mother earning \$39,000 per year (the average salary of our starting teachers) cannot afford a three-bedroom apartment for herself and two children in the town where she works.

Recent opposition to 40B centers around perceived “windfall profits” for developers; however, evidence to date does not support the assertion that a significant number of for-profit developers are receiving profits above and beyond the limits set by 40B. (It is important to note that many non-profit developers and local housing authorities across the state rely upon Chapter 40B to develop new housing.) Other 40B concerns stem from the belief that a community should have some control over real estate development. Local control issues and the infrequent



Executive Director, David J. Levy

abuses to 40B can and should be addressed without throwing out the entire statute that has produced the vast majority of new affordable units in the Commonwealth.

**VOLUNTEER with HCA!**

**Help Clean Up our Two-Families for the Fall on September 29th!**

Contact Joanna at 781-316-3606 or jain@housingcorporarlington.org for more information.

Here are some suggestions how 40B can be logically and equitably reformed:

- Require that all affordable units created under 40B remain affordable in perpetuity (or as close to perpetuity as allowed by law);
- Require that some percentage of rental units developed under 40B be affordable to lower-income residents, perhaps those earning under 60% of the area median income;
- Revise thresholds for Planned Production so that communities have more flexible options to develop their own plans for affordable housing.

Planned Production, a lesser-known regulation under 40B, allows communities to turn away 40B developments if they put forward an “Affordable Housing Plan” and show progress towards creating affordable housing. In order to comply, a community needs to increase its housing with affordable units by 0.75% each year. Among other limitations, Planned Production does not take into consideration factors such as density, open space or public transportation, which puts communities like Arlington at a disadvantage.

(Continued on page 3)

## HCA Awarded Patrick-Murray Inaugural Grant

**Here at HCA, we are thrilled to announce the Patrick-Murray Inaugural Committee has selected our organization to receive a grant for civic engagement in Massachusetts!**

With a total of \$2.2 million donated to the Patrick-Murray inauguration, Governor Deval Patrick and Lt. Governor Tim Murray decided to distribute over \$500,000 surplus to agencies across the state in grants. Doling out the excess to well-deserving non-profits highlighted the ideals of what the Inaugural Committee called “the most inclusive [inauguration] in state history.”

Massachusetts-based, non-profit organizations were chosen “based on their ability to foster local civic engagement, promote personal development, and emphasize individual responsibility,” as stated by the Committee’s website. Applying organizations were also required to have annual operating budgets below \$3 million.

Over 1,500 organizations submitted applications and a 400 person grant committee managed the selection process. The team granted \$2,500 to each of the 215 non-profits chosen. Liz Morningstar, co-chair of the Patrick-Murray Inaugural Committee, stated

that, “each organization is a vital member of the Massachusetts community whose work epitomizes the compassion, creativity and strength of our state.” (AP)

The Patrick-Murray Inaugural Committee funds will help support HCA’s efforts to continue to increase affordable housing in Arlington. “The Housing Corporation is delighted to be selected for this grant award,” says David Levy, HCA’s Executive Director. “We rely on community support on many levels and are honored to be recognized by the Governor’s Inaugural Committee.”

**Congratulations, HCA!**

## Give a Big HCA “Welcome!” to our New Board Members



A life-long Arlington resident, Mary Lou Vest graduated from Arlington High School in 1979 and managed the Chateau Restaurant for

many years. She has a wonderful husband and four beautiful boys, ages 25, 20, 18, and 14. Her 18-year-old son, James, was diagnosed with childhood cancer when he was four months old but has currently been in remission for over a year. For Mary Lou & her family, living in Arlington has been a blessing, supporting her family during tough times. They currently live in HCA housing, which has allowed them to better manage their finances. Mary Lou has decided to give back to HCA by becoming a board member and bringing her first hand expertise to assist the organization in serving people who need affordable housing or who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

John A. Cooper (AKA Jack) is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants, the first statewide public housing resident organization

in the United States. For over 19 years, he has worked with grassroots organizations and public agencies in Massachusetts and Washington DC developing public and affordable housing policies and supportive service planning. Jack currently serves as Vice President of the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), the Commonwealth’s largest research planning and advocacy group for housing and community issues. Locally, Jack is Vice President of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, which among other work, raises and donates funds to Arlington High School’s Diversity History Programs. Jack and his family have been Arlington residents since 1984.



*HCA also welcomes Joanna A. Ain as our new Outreach Coordinator!*

Joanna comes to HCA after working for the Jewish National Fund in fundraising, event planning and volunteer management. She received a BA *cum laude* in history with a concentration in Southeast Asia from Cornell University. While at Cornell, Joanna worked with both students and professionals to improve campus living for the school’s diverse population. She played a key role in distributing grants to select programs on campus, planning university activities and advising students. Joanna teaches sixth grade American Jewish history at Temple Shir Tikvah in Winchester and plays bassoon for the MIT Concert Band and the Harvard Summer Pops Band.

*Joanna is delighted to join the HCA staff and looking forward to meeting you in the coming months!*



## Walkin’ in the Rain (for Affordable Housing!)

*It was great seeing so many of our HCA friends out and about at our Sixth Annual Walk for Affordable Housing! Though the weather did not fully cooperate, over 100 supporters came out to raise awareness and funding for HCA’s affordable housing and homelessness prevention programs.*

As her last day as HCA’s Outreach Coordinator, the Walk was bittersweet for organizer, Kari Wiley. She remarked that despite the disagreeable weather, “the people who did come out were real troopers.” This exemplary group included HCA tenants, board members and town selectmen. Even slightly damp in the chilly & rainy afternoon, the walkers enjoyed their 3-mile stroll through Arlington, starting and ending at the Jason Russell House. The Hot Tamales Brass Band was on hand to pump everyone up, alongside Board Member Monique Magliozzi as our “Funky Chicken” and Molly the Clown.



David Levy and Kari Wiley

Walkers were welcomed with smiles & goodies from volunteers at four neighborhood stops: Church of Our Savior, Calvary Church United Methodist, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, and Pleasant Street Congregational. Kids participated in chances for raffles at the end of the walk using passports marked for each water stop they reached. Raffle prizes included a signed Wily Mo Pena baseball and tickets to Six Flags. Adults were given the opportunity to win visits to restaurants & other local businesses.

Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation took the lead role in supporting our Walk. Other principal sponsors included Belmont Savings Bank, BOWES GMAC Real Estate, Brookline Bank, Calvary Church United Methodist, Central Bank, Citizens Bank Foundation, East Cambridge Savings Bank Foundation, Feinmann, Inc., Watertown Savings Bank and Winchester Savings Bank.



Playing around at the Walk.

HCA also received generous support from Ammondson Architects, Arlex Oil Corp, Arlington Health Foods, The Arlington Shopper, A-Skin Care Salon, B & R Glass, Blue Ribbon BBQ, Boston Red Sox, Capital Theatre, CitySide Subaru, Coldwell Banker Cares, Park Avenue Congregational Church, Costume Company, Covenant Church, D’Agostino’s Deli, DeVito Funeral Homes, First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Fitness First, FLI Environmental, Fresh Coat Painters, Hawthorne Suites, Kevin Fallon, D.V.M., Leader Bank, The MAAC Group, Maxima Gift Center, Murray Muscular Therapy, New England Aquarium, Not Your Average Joe’s, Paddock & Mola, Park West Salon, Play Time, Peter Smith Associates, Pleasant Street Congregational Church, Print Aspects, Quebrada Bakery, Rush-Kent Insurance, Shaevel and Krems, Six Flags New England, The Sports Museum, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Susan Rudd/Coldwell Banker, Taylor Rental, Temple Shir Tikvah, and Wanamaker Hardware.



Walking for Affordable Housing

**With the help of our walkers, sponsors and supporters, the Housing Corporation raised over \$40,000!**

*Mark your calendars! Our Seventh Annual Walk for Affordable Housing is on April 13th — we look forward to seeing you there!*

(Continued from page 1)  
In order to qualify for Planned Production, based on the 2000 census, Arlington would need to produce 145 affordable housing units per year, while towns like Harvard would only be required to create 16 affordable units. This formula makes it easier for less dense, and typically more affluent, communities to comply with Planned Production, leaving towns like Arlington with few options to gain back local development controls.

Over the past six years, with incredible support from the Arlington community, the Housing Corporation of Arlington has purchased, rehabbed and made affordable 46 apartments in Arlington, without the use of 40B. However, tens of thousands of low- and moderate-income residents have benefited from housing created through 40B, and this pipeline of production should be maintained. A sharpened 40B should be upheld so that sorely-needed affordable housing continues to be created under the law.

Sincerely,  
  
David J. Levy, Executive Director