

**For Immediate Release**

CONTACT: Cheryl Ramp

703-966-6603

[cramp@apah.org](mailto:cramp@apah.org)

**Arlington County Board Advances American Legion/APAH Redevelopment**

*Project will create 160 units of affordable housing for veterans and other long-income families as well as a new post for American Legion Post 139*

Arlington, VA (February 23, 2019) – By a unanimous vote, the Arlington County Board today approved necessary rezoning, the project site plan, and \$5.8 million in funding from the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) to support redevelopment of American Legion Post 139. The Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) will build 160 affordable apartments, half set aside for veteran’s preference, as well as a new facility for the American Legion. The apartments will be committed affordable for 75 years and will be built on the current Post site on Washington Boulevard.

APAH and American Legion are committed to meeting the evolving needs of today’s veterans. Nearly 236,000 veterans in the DC area are housing cost-burdened, paying over 30% of their income for rent, and many have service-related disabilities. Arlington has a well-documented need for affordable housing, having lost nearly 90% of market affordable homes between 2000 and 2016. The new complex will include 48 one-bedroom apartments; as well as 87 two-bedroom and 25 three-bedroom units to meet the needs of veteran and low-income families. A new 6,000 SF American Legion facility will be a hub of innovative programming to meet the needs of today’s veterans.

More than 60 community supporters and dozens of speakers crowded the County Board chamber to express their enthusiasm for the project and encouraging the Board’s positive action.

In casting their votes, each County Board member praised the many dimensions of this “extraordinary” project.

- Katie Cristol celebrated “what this project means to the types of individuals and families who can live in Arlington” and noted she “cannot wait to see this [project] realized.”
- Erik Gutshall commended the geographic diversity the project brings, noting it meet[s] a very real need right where we need it to be.”
- Matt de Ferranti expressed appreciation for the “Legion’s tradition of service” that will be continued with 50% veteran’s preference planned for the project.
- Vice Chair Libby Garvey expressed her excitement about the “campus-like vision for the whole site” and looked forward to it achieving that vision of an urban “walker’s paradise. On the APAH development specifically, she noted that it will be a “model for American Legions across the nation”.
- Finally, Chair Christian Dorsey noted this project demonstrates that [Arlington] is “able to follow through and fulfill the plans we made through the Affordable Housing Master Plan and the recent General Land Use Plan.

Endorsing the project, Joe Simonelli, Colonel, US Army Retired and chair of Arlington’s Military and Veterans Affairs Committee noted, “this is a huge step toward Arlington County showing ‘thank you for

your service' to our veterans, and not just saying it. We will be an example for other communities to emulate."

Bob Romano, Commander of American Legion Post 139 stated "We look forward to a new Post, accessible and attractive to today's vets and to a new partnership with APAH on housing."

"APAH is honored to be partnering with American Legion Post 139, bringing our affordable housing mission to address the needs of veterans," said Nina Janopaul, APAH President and CEO. "We both hope this will be a model for the nation."

The next step for the Legion project is securing Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the largest single component of the project's financing plan. APAH will apply in March and is hopeful of a successful award later this year. In addition, and for the first time, APAH is raising private philanthropic funds to support \$3 million of the \$78.4 million total project cost. "We are excited to offer individuals, businesses and foundations the opportunity to be a part of this innovative project that will serve our veterans and the wider community," said Rich Jordan, APAH Board member and chair of the capital campaign. "With close proximity to the Pentagon, Fort Myer-Henderson Hall and related defense-serving businesses, Arlington receives significant economic benefit, and this is a great opportunity for the community to give back to our military and our veterans. Unfortunately, the high cost of housing has put Arlington out of reach for many, but we are excited that this project, the first collaboration of its kind, will welcome more veterans home to our community."

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APAH's mission is to develop, preserve and own quality affordable places to live; to promote stability and opportunity for our residents; and, to advocate with the people and communities we serve.