Full House for Cornerstones Candidates Forum on Affordable Housing

Reston, VA - On Monday, May 13, Cornerstones hosted a Candidates Forum on Affordable Housing for the candidates running for Hunter Mill District Supervisor. The forum drew a standing-room-only crowd of over 150 attendees, filling the Fellowship Hall at Heritage Fellowship Church, a Cornerstones’ sponsoring religious organization. The candidates discussed their ideas for affordable housing preservation, development and growth in the Hunter Mill District, including options for expanding the existing “Penny for Affordable Housing Fund”, redevelopment of the Reston Town Center North area, the importance of community conversations, and other strategies for preserving and increasing the number of affordable housing units.

All five candidates – Walter Alcorn, Laurie Dodd, Shyamali Hauth, Parker Messick, and Maggie Parker – were present. Questions for the candidates were preselected with input from district residents and asked by a three-person panel of business and community leaders. Panelists included Nasia Ashkir, Hunter Mill District Resident, Charles Kapur, Vice President for John Marshall Bank, and E.W. Marshall-Washington, MSW, Senior Community Care Manager for Cornerstones. The forum was moderated by Rev. Dr. Debra Haffner, Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reston, a Cornerstones’ sponsoring religious organization. Fairfax Public Access filmed the event; the link will be posted on Cornerstones’ website.

In her welcome, Cornerstones CEO Kerrie Wilson shared the impetus for the forum. “For nearly 50 years, Cornerstones has worked in northern Fairfax County and regionally to link families to opportunity, and stable and affordable housing options are the foundation for family and community well-being.” Wilson continued, “Unfortunately, as the economy has grown, housing costs have far outpaced incomes, creating financial and social pressures and conflicts that affect the very fabric of our civic and community life.”

Reverend Dustin B. Sullivan, Pastor of Heritage Fellowship Church and the host of the event, welcomed the candidates and participants, sharing his congregation’s own journey to understanding and impacting the issues of homelessness through acts of service. “Our work in reaching out to meet people who are struggling has mobilized our congregational commitment to our neighbors, community and our faith.” He praised the candidates’ desire to build on those connections through public service.
Wilson thanked Supervisor Catherine Hudgins for her decades of service to the Hunter Mill community, and applauded the enthusiastic response by candidates to Cornerstones’ invitation. “Never has there been a greater opportunity and imperative to fulfill Hunter Mill’s historic promise of a fair and inclusive community. Cornerstones and its partners have worked with Fairfax County to develop a bold new approach to the affordable housing crisis and look forward to continuing this work with our next Supervisor.”

Attendees noted that the large turnout impressed upon the candidates that affordable housing is an issue that is important to the voters in the Hunter Mill district and that they should pay attention.

For more information, event photos, and statements from the candidates on their positions on affordable housing, please visit https://www.cornerstonesva.org/affordable-housing-forum/.

Through advocacy and support services, Cornerstones connects families and individuals to the vital resources they need to build more stable and self-sufficient lives. It’s easy to become an advocate with Cornerstones. Sign up today at www.cornerstonesva.org/advocate. For more information, please visit www.cornerstonesva.org or call 571.323.9555.