

Disbelief should not be an option for unsafe housing conditions at AHA

By Judith Garber

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In November 2020, I attended my first public meeting of the Arlington Housing Authority (AHA), which operates many of Arlington's housing assistance programs. I was shocked to hear some of the board members dismiss tenants' concerns about rodent infestations, call them names, interrupt them, and blame them for the rodents. One tenant, on the verge of tears and tired of being silenced, wrote "Help us" on a piece of paper and held it to the computer camera.

There is a clear need for better communication and more accountability from the AHA board. The AHA needs leadership with understanding and empathy for tenants' concerns, who are committed to transparency. That's why I'm voting for Kelda Fontenot for the AHA board. Kelda has dedicated the past ten years to being a volunteer housing advocate and understands first-hand the struggle in trying to be heard by the Housing Authority. She is passionate about eliminating hardship and dehumanizing treatment of all residents experiencing housing instability.

I believe Kelda will be an empathetic, responsive, and hard-working board member. I hope you will join me in voting for Kelda for the AHA board.

— Judith Garber, Massachusetts Ave