

Kelda Fontenot for AHA Board

By Barbara Goodman

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Meetings of the Arlington Housing Authority are starting to “heat-up.” The residents continue to complain that the board doesn’t listen to their complaints about basic health and safety issues. Board members assert that they are doing their best but have limited resources and authority to address these issues. It seems obvious that when things start to “snowball” and discourse becomes uncivil, the best thing to do is for the parties to stop blaming each other and start finding practical solutions. This, of course, is much easier said than done — especially given the tension between many residents and the board.

The good news is that Kelda Fontenot, a candidate running for a seat on the Arlington Housing Authority, understands the needs and has proposed some concrete steps to improve communications and relations between the board and the residents. Along with recommendations of the League of Women Voters in their 2019 report, Kelda is committed to establishing:

- A clear process to document and track complaints and maintenance requests.
- An informative webpage.
- A tenants handbook.
- Training for board members and employees on how to interact with people with disabilities, challenges, different backgrounds.
- Regular “coffees” for informal discussions between tenants and board members.

Kelda Fontenot has demonstrated the ability to rise above the clamor and divisiveness to propose real solutions. She is the kind of person we need on the board right now.

The Housing Authority oversees five properties and is managed by an executive director and governed by a five-member board (two appointed and three elected). The residents — more than 1,100 adults and nearly 400 children — rely on the Housing Authority, to make sure that their homes at least meet basic health and safety codes and that they are treated with respect and compassion. It is our responsibility as voters to elect individuals to the Arlington Housing Authority who will protect the welfare and basic human rights of our neighbors.

On Saturday April 10, join me in voting for Kelda Fontenot for the Arlington Housing Authority.

— Barbara Goodman, Walnut Street