

September 1, 2020



Dear Green Valley Residents,

We appreciate your comments about security issues in the Green Valley neighborhood. AHC, Inc. and AHC Management share your concerns. We have also noticed an increase in loitering and littering this summer that is affecting our residents, our staff, the community at-large, and the quality of life at The Shelton.

To be clear, our residents are not the root cause of these challenges. Our property management team, who have worked together for nearly five years at The Shelton, know our residents well. According to our staff, there are often about 50 people gathered in the area near our building. Of that group, our staff estimates that only a small number live at The Shelton. We share the neighborhood's frustration because the sidewalks around our building are public property and we cannot legally do anything to prevent groups of people from gathering outside our front door.

From our perspective, there are three primary challenges that are contributing to this situation.

1. Security surrounding the construction of the new park. For years, the green space across the street from The Shelton was a gathering space for people from around the region. Some came for the camaraderie, others with not so friendly intentions. Now that the park is under construction, the crowds often congregate near the closest building – The Shelton. AHC, Inc. raised concerns about security issues with community groups, Arlington County, and the police from the very beginning of the construction process.

What we have done over the years is to increase security within and around the building as much as possible to deter criminal activity. We have invested in door alarms, dozens of security cameras, and additional exterior lighting. But we would welcome the opportunity to work together to address the need for more security in the neighborhood – particularly in and around the new park.

2. Police response in the neighborhood. Our staff has worked hard to foster good relationships with ACPD. We regularly invite community officers to our quarterly resident meetings and respect the challenges they face with reduced personnel on the streets. Even so, both our residents and our staff have found their calls to the police to be nonproductive this summer. Our residents report that the police are not responding to their calls about noise and large gatherings. Perhaps a community-wide meeting with ACPD would be a productive way to work together to address.

3. COVID-19. This is an unprecedented time with many out of work and at loose ends. Schools are virtual and many adults are working from home, or out of work altogether. Unfortunately, these hardships are disproportionately hitting the Green Valley neighborhood. As an organization, we are committed to helping our vulnerable residents through the pandemic with financial help and program supports. We have suspended late payments and evictions through the end of the year. Our 25-person Resident Services team is working daily to help our residents access the services and resources they need. Clearly more help is needed, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with Green Valley residents and the Civic Association, Arlington County and other local agencies to provide more solutions and resources.

In summary, with AHC's deep roots in the Green Valley community, we understand the challenges facing the neighborhood are complex and require a holistic community response. We are committed to working together with all our Green Valley neighbors, the Green Valley Civic Association, the Arlington County Board, and the Police Department to improve the situation and make the community more welcoming for all residents.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Werner".

Michael Werner
Vice President, AHC Management