

County hires city housing coordinator
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Albemarle County has hired Stacy Pethia, leaving Charlottesville's Department of Neighborhood Development Services momentarily without a dedicated housing staff member.

Pethia has coordinated housing programs in the city for two years and has managed the city's affordable housing fund.

"Affordable housing is a top priority for our city and this role is the primary resource we have among staff directly addressing it," City Councilor Heather Hill said by email. "I am pleased that Dr. Pethia will be continuing this work locally, leveraging her experiences from the city to further strengthen the county's focus on this very regional issue."

Pethia will join Albemarle as the county's principal planner for housing on Dec. 10. Pethia will work alongside the county's head of housing, Ron White, and is intended to become his replacement when he retires.

Previously, Pethia worked to coordinate Pittsburgh's housing authority and analyze housing programs for the regional nonprofit Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

"I don't know a whole heck of a lot about rural housing, so that allows me to learn more," Pethia said. "It's a bigger picture, bigger area ... so it takes me back to where I started."

The city has posted a job listing for a housing program coordinator. The annual salary ranges from

approximately \$56,000 to \$108,000, based on education, experience and internal factors.

Hill represents the council on the city's Housing Advisory Committee. She said that since funding for the current fiscal year already has been allocated, she does not think that Pethia's departure will slow down any specific housing projects.

"Recruiting the best candidates and in a timely manner, however, will be critical to supporting the city's housing strategy work that is on the immediate horizon through the Housing Advisory Committee," Hill said.

Following the April completion of a housing needs assessment for the city, the HAC decided to seek a consultant's help in finding a comprehensive solution to the findings of the study. The HAC intends to post a request for proposals to find the consultant on Dec. 3.

Long an issue in Charlottesville, affordable housing is increasingly becoming a focus in the county, as well. On Wednesday, the local group Interfaith Movement Promoting Action by Congregations Together brought approximately 30 people to the Board of Supervisors meeting to push the county to devote more funding to housing for seniors.

"Stacy brings an in-depth knowledge of housing issues, urban revitalization, and over two years of experience in this community," Mark Graham, director of Albemarle's community development department, said by email. "Additionally, she has established relationships with our housing partners, which we believe are critical to the county's success."

Some of the county's current partners include the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program, the Piedmont Housing Alliance and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville.