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COMMISSION UPDATES

The first interim meeting of the Virginia Housing Commission will be held April 16th at 2:00 p.m. in Senate Room C of the General Assembly Building.

At the meeting, the areas of study will be announced. Additionally, a representative from the Virginia Association of REALTORS® will provide brief comments followed by two main speakers who will each present to the Commission.

The meeting agenda can be found on our [website: vch.virginia.gov](http://vch.virginia.gov).

WHO ARE THE VHC SPEAKERS?

During the first interim meeting of the Virginia Housing Commission we will hear from two speakers each addressing a topic at the forefront of the housing sphere.

Dr. Lisa Sturtevant will speak to the recent real estate settlement and the impact on the Virginia housing market.

Currently, Dr. Sturtevant serves as Chief Economist for Bright MLS where she conducts research, creates reports, and shares insights to a vast array of audiences.

The Commission previously heard from Dr. Sturtevant while she served as Chief Economist at Virginia REALTORS®.

Sturtevant received a Ph.D in public policy from George Mason University, a master's degree in public policy from the University of Maryland, and a bachelors of science in mathematical economics from Wake Forest University.

The Commission will also hear from Professor Riley T. Keenan, University of Richmond School of Law who will present on the Constitutional law elements regarding affordable housing development on religious property.

Riley Keenan is an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Richmond School of Law where he teaches Federal Courts, Constitutional Law, and Constitutional Remedies. While serving as a visiting Assistant Professor, Keenan taught Civil Procedure for LLMs and Constitutional Remedies.

Prior to joining academia, Keenan was an associate in the Supreme Court and Appellate Practice Group at Latham & Watkins in Washington, D.C.

Keenan was first in his class at Cornell Law School and earned at Bachelors of Art with distinction from the University of Virginia in History and American Studies.

ENDORSED LEGISLATION SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR

Continuation of the Virginia Eviction Diversion Pilot Program: **SB 50 (Locke)** and **HB 477 (Coyner)**

This legislation extends the Court Eviction Diversion Pilot program from 2024 to 2025.

Foreclosures on Common Interest Communities: **HB 880 (Bulova)**

This legislation creates a minimum amount of money owed, \$5,000, for a foreclosure remedy to be used by a Common Interest Community.

Vacant and Derelict Building Registration: **SB 48 (Locke)**

This legislation enables counties, cities, and towns to create a registry for buildings that meet the definition of vacant, derelict or criminal blight.

Local Funding for Community Revitalization: **SB 49 (Locke)** and **HB 478 (Coyner)**

This legislation amends §15.2-958.5 to enable any locality to create a Community Revitalization Fund to prevent neighborhood deterioration and to increase housing supply.

Follow our newsletters for legislative housing updates.

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Census Releases 2024 Data

On March 14th the U.S. Census Bureau released their Vintage 2023 Estimates of Population and Components of change. Overall, Virginia's population grew by nearly 37,000 or .4% in 2023. This is a higher level of growth during each of the pandemic years (2020-2022). Virginia's 2023 net migration also reached the highest level compared to each of the pandemic years, reaching 21,132 compared to 733 in 2020, 8,828 in 2021 and 12,514 in 2022. While Virginia lost almost 25,000 people to other states in 2022, the 2023 numbers show a comparatively smaller loss of about 7,000. **Overall, Virginia's population patterns appear to be trending positively compared to 2020-2022 as the impact of the pandemic begins to fade.**

The data showed more U.S. counties experienced population gains than losses in 2023, that trend continued in Virginia as more counties saw gains than losses. New Kent County was listed as one of the 10 fastest-growing counties with populations of 20,000 or more in the United States in 2023. Chesterfield experienced the largest population growth gaining 5,586 residents and Loudoun followed with 3,555.

Urban areas, including both cities and counties, were slightly more likely overall to experience population gains when compared to rural cities and counties, with about 62% of urban localities experiencing gains compared to about 59% of rural localities.

More cities in Virginia experienced population losses than gains from 2022-2023 with Norfolk and Virginia Beach experiencing the largest population losses. Norfolk lost 1,628 people and Virginia Beach lost 1,420. Suffolk and Chesapeake experienced the largest population growth among the cities, with Suffolk's population rising 2,233 and Chesapeake's rising by 1,427.

U.S. Housing Starts Rise in February

Overall, privately-owned housing starts in February 2024 were 10.7% higher than the January 2024 estimate and 5.9% above the February 2023 estimate. This is the largest increase in nine months, although starts are still below the level estimated in December 2023. Much of these gains can be attributed to construction in the South and Midwest.

In February 2024 single-family housing starts, representing the bulk of homebuilding, rose to the highest level in nearly two years. Single family housing starts increased 11.6% above the January 2024 estimate. Multifamily starts increased 8.6% from January 2024 but are still 35.9% lower than one year ago in February 2023. Overall building permitting rose 1.9% in February 2024 compared to January 2024.

Single-family permitting rose 1% which is 29.5% higher than one year ago in February 2023. Multifamily permits for five units or more rose 2.4% but remained lower than one year ago by 32.8% as builders pivot back to single family construction amid a trend of lowering mortgage rates.

Completed construction rose 19.7% in February as multifamily completions hit the highest number on record since 1974 at 644,000 units. Single-family completions reached their highest level since 2007 with 1.07 million units. This is widely considered good news for the undersupplied housing market.

It is important to note that over half of these completions occurred in the South, which includes Virginia. Many credit the rise in Southern construction to warmer temperatures that improve building conditions.

Several economists cited demand for new builds and rate incentives from builders as reasons single-family starts were strong and may remain strong, despite the challenges of the current market. A survey from the National Association of Home Builders showed confidence among builders reached an eight-month high in March.

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FEATURED NEWS ARTICLES

[Springtime Momentum 'Starting to Build' in Va. Homes Market](#) (GazetteLeader)

Signs are pointing to a healthy spring market for Virginia. Springtime momentum is starting to slowly build with the largest inventory increases being seen particularly in the Winchester, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Roanoke, and New River Valley regions.

[Jobs Report Shows Economy Humming, Despite Inflation Concerns](#) (Richmond Times Dispatch)

Experts agree that the economy is doing well, but it may not feel that way to the individual consumer. However, consumer sentiments rose sharply in the first quarter of this year after years of lowered sentiments during the aftermath of the pandemic years.

The cost of housing remains high and the Federal Reserve Board is not likely to drop interest rates soon as they try to balance the economic factors.

[You Need to Earn at Least \\$100K to Afford a Typical Home in Virginia, Other States: Analysis](#) (ABC8News)

Recent data shows you need to earn at least \$100,000 to afford a "typical," home in most states, including Virginia. While the average sales price of homes is down compared to last year, prices remain near record highs.

In 2020, Bankrate analysis said you needed to earn at least \$74,000 a year to afford a typical home in Virginia. In 2024, that income estimate has reached \$106,000.

[Which Parts of Virginia are Millennial and Gen-Z Homebuyers Facing Affordability Challenges?](#) (Virginia Realtors)

Market factors in 2023 led to smaller down payments by young buyers, leading to higher monthly mortgage payments. The median monthly housing payment in the U.S. rose 12.6% from 2022 and many young homebuyers are finding it hard to afford homes in their own communities.

[Citing Lack of Affordable Land, Hampton Roads Habitat for Humanity Groups Suspend New Home Applications](#) (WHRO)

Habitat for Humanity of South Hampton Roads is postponing its application window due to lack of available and affordable land to build homes on. Finding shovel-ready land has been challenging.

The group needs to maintain an average price point of around \$30,000 per parcel of land and lots in the area are significantly more expensive than what they can afford.

[Honey, We Kept the Kids: A Challenging Housing Market Keeps Gen Z Adults at Home Longer](#) (Bluefield Daily Telegraph)

According to new research done by the Pew Research Center, young adults are reaching milestones like marriage and parenthood later in life. Nearly one third of 18-34 year old adults live with at least one parent and 72% of those young adults contribute financially to the household in at least one way. The new economic reality is challenging and the shortage of affordable housing has had a chilling effect on young adults.

[Va. Court Says Lease Agreements Can't Override Landlord's Duty to Keep Property 'Habitable'](#) (Virginia Mercury)

The Virginia Court of Appeals ruled in March that lease agreements can't override state law requiring that landlords keep their properties in "fit and habitable condition." Judge Doris Henderson Causey concluded that "it is ultimately the landlord's duty to keep the premises habitable." A lease cannot waive a tenant's rights or remedies required by law.

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**Virginia
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