

A Guide to the Charles Rinker Papers, 1960-2014

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Title Statement

A Guide to the Charles Rinker Papers, 1960-2014

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

RG 323

Language

English

Creator

Rinker, Charles W. (Charles Washington), 1940-2015

Extent

12 boxes.

Repository

Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Lora Rinker in August and October, 2016.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Researchers interested in Charlie and Lora Rinker, as well as their work in affordable housing and homelessness respectively, should see their oral histories.

Researchers interested in community-led affordable housing initiatives should see [RG 34, Records of the Tenants of Arlington County \(TOAC\)](#). Researchers interested in Arlington County's community and housing planning should see [RG 58, Arlington County Government Publications](#) and [RG 130, Arlington County Planning Commission Records](#). [RG 337, Records of Buyers and Renters Arlington Voice \(BRAVO\)](#), holds materials for this Rinker-founded organization.

Biographical Information

Charles "Charlie" Rinker was born and raised in Winchester, Virginia. He received his undergraduate degree from Randolph Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, and his graduate degree in divinity at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey. Charlie met his wife, Lora Rinker, in either high school or church according to Lora, and after Lora's graduation from James Madison University in 1962, the couple married. They both attended Drew Seminary for graduate school, graduating in 1966.

Following graduation, Charlie and Lora moved to Washington, DC, with four other Drew students and Charlie began working for the Council of Churches of Greater Washington (CCGW). While working for CCGW, Charlie got involved in housing advocacy and work, particularly through a project called People United Against Slum Housing, which worked to pressure slum landlords to maintain their rental properties or sell to tenants.

The Rinkers moved to Arlington in 1969 to help tackle racism and promote civil rights in a "white community." According to Charlie, the Washington, DC, black community in the late 1960s called on white civil rights advocates to move into majority white areas and use their privilege to further civil rights. Charlie and Lora bought a house in Arlington where they raised their three children and lived for the remainder of their lives.

Charlie began his work in affordable housing in 1975 after Arlington was approved as a community development block grant community. He, along with Ellen Bozman and other community members, formed a community group to decide what to do with that designation and accompanying grant. Since the County did not have a Housing Authority and was uninterested in forming one, they decided to form an affordable housing nonprofit, which became the Arlington Housing Corporation (AHC), an organization which still runs to this day. Charlie served as the organization's second president and later served on the board for many years. "Known initially as the Arlington Housing Corporation, AHC has evolved from a nonprofit grassroots entity providing a home improvement program for low and moderate-income homeowners in Arlington to a full-service organization whose low and mixed-income housing communities serve Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax County in Virginia and Montgomery County and the Baltimore area in Maryland."

Charlie Rinker became actively involved in Arlington County affordable-housing issues in the 1990s as a result of the contentious battle over the redevelopment of Arna Valley. He and other community members organized to protest the redevelopment of Arna Valley, which displaced over 700 low-income and minority households. This moment marked a watershed in Arlington County's commitment and concern for affordable housing and motivated the County to appoint an Affordable Housing Task Force, which set the basis for the County's new Affordable Housing Principles and Goals.

Arna Valley's destruction particularly motivated Charlie to establish two new organizations: Arlington New Directions Coalition (ANDC) and Buyers and Renters Arlington Voice (BRAVO). ANDC was founded to advocate for an economically and culturally diverse community that is responsive and caring toward all. It was an informal, community based discussion group that aimed help make Arlington a more caring and compassionate community through education and advocacy. ANDC served as the backbone for much of Charlie's ongoing work in affordable housing. As President of ANDC, Charlie headed and supported many local initiatives to promote affordable housing in Arlington County. Charlie was active with ANDC from its founding in 1999 to its end in 2013. BRAVO was founded as a tenant empowerment and education organization that aimed to advance and defend the rights and interests of Arlington's tenants by empowering them and working together to preserve affordable housing and the economic and cultural diversity of the community. Charlie also co-founded Arlington Home Ownership Made Easier (A-HOME) in 1989, which sought to increase the number of low and moderate income and minority homeowners in the County through education and counselling.

The Alliance for Housing Solutions (AHS) leads HousingArlington, a coalition of housing and safety net providers. The coalition's aim is to share information and resources to effectively advocate for a range of housing issues in Arlington, including budget issues. AHS took the lead in crafting a coalition approach to

housing needs, particularly in regard to the Arlington County budget, in 2010. In 2013, AHS teamed up with Arlington New Directions Coalition to convene several meetings throughout the year exploring housing-focused coalition work.

Charlie Rinker died at the age of 74 on January 8, 2015. A month prior the Virginia General Assembly honored both Charlie and Lora Rinker for their "leadership and devotion to the community." Following his death, Arlington County proclaimed January 18, 2015 as "Tribute Day for Charlie Rinker" in recognition for his contributions to affordable housing and community development in Arlington.

Although Lora Rinker was involved in Charlie's work to advocate for affordable housing, she focused her efforts on combating hunger and homelessness. In 1991 she co-founded A-SPAN (Arlington Street People's Assistance Network) and served as its Executive Director until 2007. While running A-SPAN, she also started Arlington's first emergency winter shelter for the homeless.

Scope and Content

This collection primarily contains materials related to Charlie Rinker's work to promote affordable housing in Arlington County. The collection spans the years 1960-2014, but the bulk of the collection dates from 1998-2014. The collection measures 5.09 linear feet.

The first two series contain materials related to Rinker's work in affordable housing organizations or to promote affordable housing initiatives. These materials primarily hold meeting minutes, notes, and supplementary materials on affordable housing statistics and Arlington County budgets, as well as email correspondence both among affordable housing organizational members to plan meetings, determine next steps, and draft public statements and to County officials either in support of or against County budget and/or affordable housing proposals. Interspersed in meeting materials are newspaper articles related to affordable housing and the County budget. Furthermore, there is a large collection of Arlington County Board Meeting Agendas.

Series 1 holds the records for community or non-government/Arlington County led affordable housing initiatives or organizations of which Charlie Rinker was an active participant. The series is split into three subseries. *Subseries 1, Arna Valley*, contains materials related to the fight to save Arna Valley from redevelopment. *Subseries 2, Arlington New Directions Coalition*, contains materials related to ANDC including board meeting agendas, minutes, and notes, correspondence, and newspaper articles related to housing and the County budget. There are also materials on other housing business Charlie Rinker was involved in while concurrently serving as president of ANDC. Exceptions to this are for events or organizations that had enough material to justify separation, as well as materials that were stored separately by Rinker. The final subseries is *Subseries 3, Other Organizations*. This subseries contains materials related to affordable housing initiatives that were one time or short-term events or organizations that did not warrant a whole subseries.

Series 2 holds the records for Arlington County Government led or sponsored initiatives for affordable housing. It primarily holds email correspondence and meeting notes for various roundtables held by the County.

Series 3 holds organizational newsletters and Arlington County publications. The majority of these materials relate to affordable housing but are not directly tied to Rinker's work. Rinker supported many affordable housing organizations, such as the AHC and Wesley Housing, so this series contains these organizations' newsletters and solicitation letters. It also contains a selection of newsletters related to Arlington County like "The Citizen" and Arlingtonians for a Better County. In addition, this series contains materials related to Arlington County's planning department, tenant informational brochures, and a 1994 Citizens' Handbook.

Series 4, Politics, holds materials related to Rinker's political activism. It primarily contains the Arlington County Democratic Committee Newsletter from August 1997-May 2013, as well as articles against George Bush and the Iraq War and correspondence from and recommendations to various political campaigns and elected officials, including the 2004 Howard Dean presidential and 2008 Obama presidential campaign. There is also a selection of materials related to Arlington County politics including a fundraiser hosted by Charlie and Lora Rinker for Melissa Bondi's campaign for the Arlington County Board.

Index Terms

Subjects:

Housing.

Discrimination in housing

Arlington (Va.)

Arlington County (Va.)

Arrangement

This collection is arranged by topic area and within topic area by chronology. The collection is divided into four series: *Series 1, Community Affordable Housing Initiatives, Series 2, Arlington County Affordable Housing Initiatives, Series 3, Housing, County, and Community Newsletters and Publications, and Series 4, Politics.* The first two series contain materials related to a vast number of organizations and working groups dedicated to affordable housing that Charlie Rinker was a member of or led. The final two series contain materials tangential to Rinker's work to advocate for affordable housing, such as political newsletters and correspondence, newsletters from housing organizations of which Rinker was not an active participant, and Arlington County community information and newsletters.

Series 1 holds materials of organizations where Rinker was active. The three subseries here are organized by two major groups - the fight to save Arna Valley (*Subseries 1*) and Arlington New Directions Coalition (*Subseries 2*). The third subseries holds materials for smaller or more temporary organizations, committees, or events.

There are some oversized materials in this collection, which have been moved to appropriate housing. Separation sheets have been added to mark their original placement. An asterisk (*) at the end of the folder title denotes oversized materials found in this location. All folder titles were created by the archivist.

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