



**Fair Housing Council of
Suburban Philadelphia**

The Nation's Oldest Fair Housing Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Parkland View Apartments in Upper Macungie Township Agrees to Correct Federal Fair Housing Act Violations

*Alterations Will Result in More Accessible Housing
for People with Disabilities*

Fort Washington, PA - On March 7, 2014, the Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia ("FHCS") and the developers, designers and management of Parkland View Apartments entered into an agreement to bring the 378 unit apartment community in Upper Macungie, Pennsylvania into compliance with the Federal Fair Housing Act's accessibility requirements.

Developer Kushner Real Estate Group, S/K Cetronia Associates, LP, Majic Pennsylvania Corp., and Minno & Wasko, Architects & Planners, P.C. signed an agreement that will result in extensive alterations to Parkland View Apartments. FHCS will also receive \$55,000 to cover a portion of the costs incurred to bring about the agreement.

In 2011 and 2012, FHCS conducted an investigation funded by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Housing Initiatives Program grant that uncovered Fair Housing Act violations effectively precluding wheelchair users and people with other mobility impairments from renting nearly all first floor units at Parkland View Apartments. FHCS documented buildings with steps leading to entrances and excessively high thresholds impeding access for people with physical disabilities or mobility impairments. Inside the apartments, FHCS found electrical outlets at inaccessible locations and elevation changes making the patio inaccessible. FHCS also discovered numerous Fair Housing Act violations in Parkland View's clubhouse, mailroom, pool, computer room, fitness room, sidewalks and parking lots.

"FHCS applauds the developers, designers and management of Parkland View Apartments for their cooperation in coming to an agreement to make the changes necessary to comply with the requirements of fair housing law. The retrofits will increase housing opportunities for people with disabilities in the region and make accessible all of the wonderful amenities Parkland View Apartments offers its tenants" commented FHCS Executive Director, James Berry.

The Fair Housing Act design and construction requirements apply to “covered multifamily dwellings” designed and constructed “for first occupancy” after March 13, 1991. Covered multifamily dwellings are all buildings containing four or more dwelling units if the buildings have an elevator and all ground floor units in buildings containing four or more units, without an elevator. This includes housing that is for rent or for sale and applies whether the housing is privately or publicly funded.

In order to be in compliance with the Fair Housing Act, there are seven basic design and construction requirements that must be met. These requirements are: 1) An accessible building entrance on an accessible route; 2) Accessible public and common use areas; 3) Usable doors (usable by a person in a wheelchair); 4) Accessible route into and through the dwelling unit; 5) Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls in accessible locations; 6) Reinforced walls in bathrooms for later installation of grab bars; and 7) Kitchens and bathrooms must be usable-that is, designed and constructed so an individual in a wheelchair can maneuver in the space provided.

“Despite the fact that accessibility requirements have been in place for over 22 years, we continue to see violations like those at Parkland View Apartments throughout Southeast Pennsylvania” commented Megan Bolin, FHCSPP Outreach & Communications Coordinator. Between 2005 and 2013, FHCSPP conducted investigations of 38 new construction apartments and condominiums in Southeast Pennsylvania and found that 18 communities (47%) did not meet the minimum standards required under the Fair Housing Act.

Mr. Berry pledged that FHCSPP would continue to correct violations one community at a time if needed, but is calling for a broader approach to tackle this problem. “It’s unacceptable that enforcement of this requirement is left in the hands of a small nonprofit” Mr. Berry commented. “The homebuilding industry needs to fully understand their responsibility to comply with accessibility requirements and municipal government officials must use their authority to reject plans that create barriers for people with disabilities. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s system to ensure accessibility compliance in the construction of multi-family housing obviously does not work and needs to be overhauled in order to identify potential violations before housing is built” added Mr. Berry.

FHCSPP was represented by attorneys Glenn Schlactus and Michael Allen of the Washington, DC based law firm Relman, Dane and Colfax, as well as, Rocco Iacullo of the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania.

Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia (www.fhcspp.com)

FHCSPP is a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination in Southeast Pennsylvania. Currently, FHCSPP serves Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery and Northampton Counties and the City of Philadelphia. As the nation’s oldest fair housing agency, FHCSPP has a long history of exposing discriminatory practices, which have resulted in the opening of over 47,000 housing units to minorities, families with children, and people with disabilities. FHCSPP’s accessibility investigations are funded by the Fair Housing Initiatives Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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FHCSP Investigation Pictures

Parkland View Apartments in Breinigsville, PA

Apartment patio, rear walkway and parking:



Apartment building entrance:



Apartment patio and rear walkway:



Apartment building entrance:

