



All Parks Alliance for Change ■ APAC

An Organization of Manufactured Home Park Residents

2020 Legislative Agenda: **Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Background on Manufactured Housing

- **What is All Parks Alliance for Change?** – APAC is the statewide organization representing Minnesota's 180,000 manufactured (mobile) home park residents.
- **Who lives in Manufactured Home Parks?** – The Minnesota Department of Health licenses 915 park communities in 85 counties and 400 cities. We represent one out of every 20 households in the state. We are long-time, self-sufficient home owners with 87% of us owning our homes and over 40% of us living in the same home for 10 years or more.
- **What is the benefit of Manufactured Housing?** – It offers very low housing costs (average lot rent statewide is \$417) and the opportunity for low-income home ownership (on average \$28,900 for existing homes and \$74,200 for new homes). Although 80% of us are low- to very-low income, our housing is unsubsidized and provides more affordable housing than all project-based HUD subsidized housing units.

Alternative for Dispute Resolution between Park Owners and Home Owners

- **Background** – Manufactured home parks present a unique housing situation. One party owns the land and other parties own the homes sitting on that land. The control that home owners expect to have over their home is tempered by the control that a park owner has over the land. As a result, fundamental property rights are put into competition with each other in ways that differ from other tenant/landlord scenarios. Inevitably, a number of disputes arise between home owners and park owners from this arrangement.
- **Current Law** – Many disputes arise from this arrangement and home owners have few options they are able to use. Legal Aid will often accept eviction cases and Conciliation Court provides an option for monetary issues under \$15,000. However, a violation of a home owner's lease or legal rights requires the time and expense of going to court, which is unrealistic for most home owners.
- **Problem** – In many cases, the only way to resolve a dispute between park owners and home owners is through the court system. Going to court can be confusing and expensive. The court process can take a great deal of time. As a result, many people allow violations of their rights to continue because they do not have the time and money to go to court.
- **Proposed Changes** – Establish a program through the Minnesota Offices of Administrative Hearings that can provide either mediation or a legal ruling on a dispute, other than eviction, as an alternative to pursuing a case in court. Either park owner or home owner can use this system and neither is barred from pursuing additional legal action. Another similar program conducted by the OAH for neighborhood issues in South St. Paul is generally able to resolve issues within 30 days at a cost of only a couple hundred dollars.