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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CFH WORK AT EAST END NEARS COMPLETION AS CFH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**TESTIFIES ON VIRGINIA SENATE MOBILE HOME BILL**

**Manassas, Va., July 16 –** Catholics for Housing (CFH), a Northern Virginia nonprofit, which purchased East End Mobile Home Park in January from EEMHP, LLC, has now substantially completed the work needed to save the Park from closure and condemnation and give the nearly 250 residents a clean, functional and safe place to call home. After several months of updating and replacing sewer lines and water pipes, all residents have now been connected to the new water and sewer lines and have become customers of the City of Manassas for their water usage, according to CFH Executive Director Karen DeVito.

DeVito has over three decades of experience creating and managing housing opportunities along the entire spectrum from homelessness to homeownership, and worked closely with East End’s residents both before and after the property was purchased. DeVito herself met individually with residents to review and execute their lease agreements, which provide a five-year lease term with a sustained rental rate. “This was an invaluable process; we learned a great deal from sitting down with each of the residents,” she commented.

With the information gleaned from this and her other housing experience, DeVito was invited by State Senator Jeremy S. McPike to testify July 18 before the Virginia Senate Neighborhood Transitions and Residential Land Use Workgroup on behalf of Senate Bills 648 and 649. Senate Bill 648 amends the Code of Virginia as it relates to the Manufactured Home Lot Rental Act. The bill’s changes reflect the kind of situation East End’s residents faced prior to CFH’s purchase of East End from the previous owner, when a majority of the residents at East End pushed for CFH to become the owner of the Park. “*Prior to accepting any offer to purchase the manufactured home park from a bona fide purchaser, the owner shall first offer to sell the manufactured home park on the same terms and conditions to any resident association representing at least 25 percent of the community, or a nonprofit or housing authority acting at the request of at least 25 percent of the residents, that has provided written notice to the landlord of its interest in purchasing the manufactured home park.”* Senate Bill 649 Increases the amount a tenant can recover after a landlord violates the Manufactured Home Lot Rental Act. East End tenants took action against the previous owner for failure to properly maintain the Park. DeVito was accompanied by CFH Board Member Charlie Einsmann, who with DeVito answered questions following the formal testimony.

**A Brief History of East End**

East End Mobile Home Park sits on a stretch of Centreville Road in Manassas, VA. that was home to residents of three mobile home parks for decades. The original owners sold all but East End, which was kept in the family and managed by an agent for the last 10 years. In 2009, the City of Manassas began notifying the agent of sewer leaks and excessive usage through the domestic water system. As a result of not correcting the problems when first notified, the systems became severely damaged and replacement became necessary. Discussions then began regarding the feasibility of selling the property to the City of Manassas. In April 2016, the City and the managing agent got as far as executing a sales contract for $1,864,700. One of the conditions of the purchase required the Park owner to evict all tenants and remove all mobile homes from the property. Approximately 250 people were about to be homeless. This was unacceptable to the Park’s residents, many of whom owned their homes and most of whom had been there for many years, with children well established in the local schools.

Local advocates reached out to Dumfries-based CFH, a non-profit with nearly four decades of experience helping individuals and families create sustainable homes, to see if they could provide any resolution in which the families would not lose their homes. After much research and much discussion, the CFH Board of Directors determined that acquiring the East End Mobile Home Park would fit within the CFH mission. CFH committed to fixing the water and sewer issues and offered a purchase contract of $1.4 million, which was accepted by the previous Owner and approved by the City of Manassas; settlement was in January of this year.

**About Catholics for Housing**

CFH, based in Dumfries, VA., provides a continuum of housing services, offering direct service programs to limited income households as well as workforce rental and homeownership opportunities and a comprehensive life skills program that helps people identify and reach their goals. The Board of Directors of CFH represents a diverse group of individuals who provide expertise in business, development, architecture, financial services and the real estate industry.