

Alexandria Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

2525 Mt Vernon Avenue

Multipurpose Room

7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Stowe; Anuja Miner (1 absence); Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin; Elizabeth “PJ” Palmer Johnson; Shelley Brown; Lee Taylor-Penn; Jennifer Wetmore; Emily Eckert; Crystal Kramer; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Yvette Jiang; Ann Harbour (1 absence), and Rochelle Hall

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Charlotte Schrerer (1 absence); Sarah Porter (1 absence) and Sarah Holley (1 absence)

OTHER ATTENDEES: Debra Evans, Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Domestic Violence Program/Sexual Assault Center (DV/SA); LaTanya Chinagorom, DCHS, DV/SA

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Alexandria Commission for Women (ACFW) was called to order by Chair Harbour at 7:23 p.m. The floor was opened for public comment. No public comments were made.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MARCH 2021 MINUTES

Review of the minutes for March 2022 took place. Chair Harbour moved to approve the minutes as amended. All were in favor. There was a second amendment to the March 2022 meeting minutes for the Commission for Women. All were in favor of the additional amendment.

3. IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Expectations for in-person meetings: As of April 1, 2022, City Council has deemed that in-person meetings will be held. Commissioners are obligated to meet in person. It was noted that Commissioners should make it clear when they feel it is unsafe for them to attend an in-person meeting. The Commission will be concise with the use of their time. It was suggested to hold breakout sessions virtually.

Selection of Retreat Date: The Commission retreat will be held in August or September 2022. **Action Item: A doodle poll will be sent to Commissioners for dates in August and September 2022.**

4. CITY COUNCIL LIAISON DISCUSSION

The Commission discussed how to best meet with City Council. Their desire is to continue to refine how to liaise and share one-pagers with them. It was expressed that providing a list of specific items would be more valuable for City Council. It was suggested to invite City Council to attend a retreat or invite them on an off day (possibly a Thursday evening). **Action Item: Commissioners' names will be placed on the bottom of the one-pagers.** It was noted that the Affordable Housing Subcommittee does not have their one-pager finalized and it should not hold up the Domestic Violence Subcommittee from forwarding their one-pager. It was suggested to meet with City Council at 6:30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Action Item: Commissioners will reach out to the newer members of City Council.

Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will share a package from Councilmember Sarah Bagley with the Affordable Housing Subcommittee.

Action Item: The Affordable Housing Subcommittee will review the Affordable Housing Masterplan (available online) to obtain more information.

Next steps- speak with Kate Garvey as the convener of the Boards and Commissions:

Action Item: Debra Evans will inform Kate Garvey, Director, DCHS, of the Commission's intentions of shifting their meetings.

5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Commission discussed how they can share information, identify gaps, and help support one another. It was suggested to ask for the historical context on liaisons. It was noted that the Commission for Women does not have a liaison for the Public Health Advisory Commission.

Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson and Debra Evans will contact Gloria Sitton about the historical context of having a liaison.

Action Item: The topic of liaison in other Boards and Commissions will be discussed during the August 2022 Retreat.

Action Item: The Commission for Women webpage for Vola Lawson, Friends, Salute to Women and volunteer information will be updated. All were asked to think of events that other Boards and Commissions are doing.

How can the Commission work with other Commissions/non-profits, etc. to raise awareness?:

Action Item: The Commission for Women will look into getting involved in the National Association of Commissions for Women. This will be added to the agenda for next month – at this meeting the Commission will determine the best way to join the Association and how to partner with *Alexandria Celebrates Women Now!*

Action Item: The Commission will reach out to Pat Miller for a meeting.

Action Item: The Commission will follow up with the new City Attorney on how they can hold funds.

It was noted that the Commission has a mandate to follow-up on cases with the Human Rights Commission and that there may be other entities within the City with whom the Commission for Women may have joint meetings with. Commissioner Palmer Johnson along with the Human Rights Commission also have an Equal Justice Initiative where 100 people from Alexandria will go to Montgomery, AL, in reference to lynching; they will pick up a flag and bring it back to the City.

Action Item: The Commission will take a look at historical events that were done. Before sending the one-pagers, the purpose or mission would be more of a policy and program focused mission (revive and revolve policy and topics). It was suggested to turn one-pagers into TedTalks on Affordable Housing and to relaunch the Commission in 2023.

The issue of hosting a ceremony honoring Councilwoman Redella “Dell” Pepper was discussed. The venue Vola Lawson Lobby is unavailable (not reserving the space for activities) the last time Commissioner Palmer Johnson checked.

Action Item: The Commission will discuss honoring retired Councilwoman Redella “Dell” Pepper at a future meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson made a motion that the Commission continue discussions around how to have a mix between policy, recognition service events and outreach for the next meetings. Second Vice Chair Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor.

6. REPORT OUT

- *DV/SA Subcommittee (Co-chairs Nicole and Jenn) – Reported at the last Commission meeting. Nothing has changed.*
- *Affordable Housing Subcommittee (Chair - Crystal) – Affordable Housing met and discussed what they are doing different from other organizations within the City. Focus is being put on the women’s shelter. Outreach is happening.*
- *DASH Representative Report Out – Commissioner Jiang provided an update to the DASH stroller policy. DASH has a community wish list. Chair Harbour made a motion for Commissioner Jiang to draft a letter to advocate for funding priorities outlined in the presentation for community sharing to City Council members. Commissioner Miner seconded. All were in favor.*
- *DVP/SAC Wishlist - https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry_custom_url&type=CHARITY*

- Commission on Human Rights: Commissioner Palmer Johnson reported on the Commission on Human Rights meeting that took place on March 15, 2022. The meeting report has been sent to the Commission for Women.
- Commission on Aging: Commissioner Stowe reported on the Commission on Aging (COA) meeting that took place Thursday, April 14, 2022, 4:00 p.m. The meeting report has been sent to the Commission for Women.
- Commission on HIV/AIDS: N/A.

7. ELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Commissioner Palmer Johnson is heading the Nominating Committee due to Commissioner Miner being nominated for one of the Executive Committee positions. Two nominees for Chair were made - First Vice Chair Kramer and Second Vice Chair Brown (asked that her name be removed); One nominee for First Vice Chair – Commissioner Miner; Second Vice Chair - Commissioner Stowe and Second Vice Chair Brown. The floor was open for self-nomination from the floor. The Commission encourages that members step up to serve in leadership roles. Elections will be held on May 10, 2022. **Action Item: The Bylaws will be checked to find out if Commissioners can vote by proxy.**

8. ONGOING BUSINESS

Zebra Articles: The article for June has been submitted. Zebra's guidelines are that articles should have an Alexandria focus and art/photo. Articles are needed earlier (date moved from the 15th to the 10th monthly).

Adjournment

Chair Harbour motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Palmer Johnson so moved; Commissioner Eckert seconded. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Important Dates / Reminders / Announcements

- ✓ **Mental Health Awareness Month (May)**
- ✓ **LGBTQ+ Awareness Month (June)**
- ✓ **Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)**
- ✓ **Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October)**