

Alexandria Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Crystal Kramer; Emily Eckert; Yvette Jiang; Shelley Brown; Sarah Porter (1 excused absence); Sarah Holley (3 excused absences); Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin (1 excused absence); T. Nicole Hutchinson (1 excused absence/1 unexcused); Lexi White (1 excused absence); Lee Taylor-Penn (2 excused absences); Anuja Miner (1 excused absence); Jennifer Wetmore (2 excused absences), and Matthew Worner

VIRTUAL: Jennifer Stowe (2 excused absences)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Charlotte Scherer (1 unexcused absence/1 excused absence); Elisabeth Palmer Johnson (3 excused absences)

OTHER ATTENDEES: Debra Evans, Domestic Violence Program/Sexual Assault Center (DVP/SAC), Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and LaTanya Chinagorom (DVP/SAC, DCHS); Tamara Jovovic, Housing Manager, Alexandria Office of Housing and Betsy Faga, Chair, Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC)

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER/PUBLIC COMMENT

The virtual meeting of the Alexandria Commission for Women (ACFW) was called to order by Chair Kramer at 7:02 p.m. This meeting was held in-person with the zoom option available and was made open to the public. Introductions were made. The floor was opened for public comment.

2. PRESENTATION BY THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMISSION

Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (ARHAAC) and the Office on Housing (City government) work on planning and implementation. They work closely with the Department of Community and Human Services and Planning and Zoning and collaborate with Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA) a State-chartered, non-City government entity), and The Campagna Center. They will update the Housing Master plan in 15 to 24 months. They have partnerships within the affordable housing locations. They look at housing cost burden and how it impacts those with income of \$50K and below. They also have client-based landlord tenant counseling. Some challenges are achieving deeper levels of affordability. Properties can issue evictions. City gap funding is essential for affordable housing.

Christ Church and St. Joseph has a financial ministry. Grants have been received from ACT for Alexandria and are working with the Commission on Aging.

Planning and zoning will send out news releases and resources for public education and will bring topics for discussion later in the year 2023. Alex West is looking into how to do on site meetings. Mid-February to mid-March will hope to get people to discuss housing. This is the first year that other commissions and boards have agreed to support each other more. ARHAAC were asked what they can do to encourage City Council to take topics to State legislature.

Asking City Council to talk more broadly with developers, for-profit developers, faith communities and boards and commissions to make the project viable. They also would like to increase the meal tax that is dedicated to affordable housing. They currently generate \$5M per year (1% goes the meal tax goes to housing). The Children Youth and Family Collaborative Commission and the Economic Opportunity Board are interested in supporting. **Action Item: The Commission for Women will promote the opportunity to use the meal tax as a talking point. Action Item: Tamara will ask staff who tracks evictions and the financial ministry to track gender break down to data. The data is available but not kept. the data is needed for legislation. Action Item: Creating affordable daycares will be reviewed.**

3. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Chair Kramer requested a motion to approve the December 2022 minutes. First Vice Chair Miner moved, Second Vice Chair Brow seconded. Commissioner Wetmore abstained. All were in favor. The December 2022 minutes were adopted.

4. REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS

- Affordable Housing & Transportation –Commissioner Jiang provided affordable housing and transportation social media website content. Social Media been posted on the Commission for Women website.
- DASH Representative Report Out – Historic ridership growth has been seen through the Fare Free Program. DASH ridership more than doubled, August 2021 – August 2022 – midday, evenings and weekends and exceeded pre-pandemic levels and will be higher than 2023 levels. There was a 22% increase in new riders (before the new launch network). The Duke Street in Motion web page will show results their survey.
- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking: The City Council adopted a proclamation (with editing assistance from the Commission) and tomorrow is Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The will post pictures of the proclamation tomorrow. The invitation to the Commission’s Human

Trafficking Awareness panel event has been passed out to all of City Council, local Commissions for Women and the boards and commissions. Pat Miller shared the event, and it will be in next week's *Alexandria's Times*. It was suggested that the Commission become more involved with The National Exploitation Center for Missing Children and Legal Services of Northern Virginia.

Action Items:

- **All were asked to mark their calendars for January 23, 6:30 p.m.**
- **Commissioners should be present and be there by 6 p.m.**
- **All were asked to email Commissioner Wetmore to assist with logistics.**
- **All were asked contact Commissioners Stowe and Wetmore to donate food.**
- **Second Vice Chair Brown will contact her church for food donations.**
- **Commissioner Eckert will check with a board member of *Together We Bake*.**
- **Commissioner Stowe will cover flyers and print items for local organizations.**
- **Commissioner Porter will advertise at the Alexandria City High School.**
- **Debra Evans will email the Alexandria Police Department Captain about attending the panel.**
- **Commission members are to provide questions for the panel.**
- **It was suggested to have the event info posted on the *730DC* event calendar.**
- **Reproductive Rights Subcommittee: National Abortion Provider Appreciation Day. The subcommittee planned to have a letter of support provided and discuss at the February 2023 meeting. The subcommittee is in the preliminary stages of putting together a proposal for a webinar on the state of abortion rights in the Commonwealth with focus on the City or it may be a regional focus with collaboration. A virtual meeting from the Teen Wellness Center – it was discussed to help them put together a resource page for the kids. The Teen Wellness Center does not have flyers to refer kids out. Commissioner Bennet-Parker is interested. **Action Item: Commissioner Lee-Taylor created a spreadsheet on the other commissions in the State as well noting the human rights commissions. She will share with the Commission and possibly put on SharePoint.****

Commissioner Porter had a phone call with the head of the sex education department for Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). ACPS is currently revising the sexual education program and must get the revision approved by a committee and the school board. It also must be made available for public comment.

Commissioner White shared that a State legislative session is coming up. *Repro Rising* launched a no abortion ban in the Virginia petition and are looking to get signatures. They have an [RSVP link](#) for advocacy day and will have buses for those who need transportation. The event is in Richmond, VA.

A press conference will be held on January 24, 2023. A Constitutional amendment for reproductive freedom has been filed and they will lift up two priorities on Lobby Day.

- Commissioner/City Council Engagement: Commissioner Witkin reached out to Councilman Chapman and provided information about the Human Trafficking event.
- Human Rights (HR) Commission: No report at this time.
- Aging Commission – A meeting is coming up Thursday, January 12th at 4pm.
- HIV/AIDS Commission: The HIV/AIDS Commission did not have a meeting in December 2022.
- DVP/SAC Wishlist - https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry_custom_url&type=CHARITY
- 50th Anniversary Subcommittee: The year 2024 will be the 50th anniversary for the Commission for Women. This subcommittee has not met yet. Commissioner inquired about funding. Budget was discussed. Commissioners previously sold tickets for the Salute to Women and Alexandria Friends of the Commission for Women provided funding for the event and funding went to the Domestic Violence Shelter. **Action Item: Commissioner Stowe will join the 50th Anniversary subcommittee.**

5. WEBSITE BIO EXAMPLES

Commissioners were asked to turn in their bios for the Commission for Women website. **Action Item: First Vice Chair Miner will send Commissioner Worner the format and will reach out to Commissioners that she has not heard from.**

6. TRACKING COMMISSIONERS' HOURS

Chair Kramer discussed the need for having Commissioners follow-through on engagement. The information on how to track hours were provided.

7. ZEBRA ARTICLES

The *Zebra Press* articles will be taken off of the agenda until Chair Kramer and the editor of *Zebra Press* meet. The topic will be added back to the agenda based on the outcome of the meeting.

Next Steps/Adjournment

Chair Kramer requested a motion to adjourn the meeting all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m. Subcommittee meetings were held afterward.

Important Dates / Reminders / Announcements

- ✓ **Human Trafficking / Stalking Awareness Month (January)**
- ✓ **Black History Month / Teen Dating Awareness Month (February)**
- ✓ **Women's History (February)**
- ✓ **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)**
- ✓ **Children's Mental Health Awareness Month (May)**

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