

**Alexandria Commission for Women**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, September 12, 2023**

**7:00 pm**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Elisabeth Palmer Johnson; Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin; Yvette Jiang; Jennifer Stowe; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Lexi White; Shelley Brown, Matthew Worner; Emily Eckert: Rachel Brill-Mekler

**PRESENT VIRTUALLY:** Jennifer Wetmore and Jennifer “Jenn” Stowe

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Crystal Kramer; Anuja Miner

**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)

**1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER/PUBLIC COMMENT**

The in-person meeting of the Alexandria Commission for Women (ACFW) was called to order by Second Vice Chair Brown at 7:11 p.m. This meeting was held in person and via Zoom and was made open to the public for comment.

**2. APPROVAL OF JUNE 2023 MINUTES**

The June 2023 minutes were shared with the Commissioners during the meeting for review. A motion was made by Second Vice Chair Brown to accept the minutes as amended and asked for a second. Commissioner Worner seconded. All were in favor.

**3. ACFW Calendar**

Commissioner Wetmore created a shared calendar for the Commission. The calendar will display events that are of interest to the Commission. She shared the calendar with the Commission for Women Executive Board, Debra Evans and LaTanya Chinagorom. **Action Item: All who have ideas and want to share with Commissioner Wetmore via email with events to add to the calendar.**

#### 4. LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES UPDATE BY SEPTEMBER 30TH

The Commission will turn in the form for the legislative priorities by September 22, 2023. September 30th is the firm due date. The full package will be submitted October 6th. The Commission will choose the top two priorities to submit.

The City's priorities were read and discussed. The Commission will ask for a cap on rent increases and introduce legislation that the landlord cannot increase the rent any more than 5% per year. They will align it with the consumer price index and rent cannot be raised more than once per year or 10% of the lowest rent charged in the prior 12 months, whichever is less. The Commission's subcommittees do the work that falls into the City's six budget priorities. Commissioner White proposed a procreation resolution as an item for the November 2023 budget priorities. The Commission would like to include virtual meetings in this legislative session. It was expressed that virtual meetings would increase community engagement and decrease childcare and transportation costs. **Action Item: Rank order the priorities.**

Second Vice Chair Brown motioned to approve more than two priorities and move forward to discuss with Sarah Taylor. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Palmer Johnson; all were in favor. Commissioner Wetmore abstained. **Action Item: The Commission approved that these would move forward to Sarah Taylor.**

A Memorandum of Agreement for social media fundraising was discussed. This agreement will be voted on by the Commission. The Commission currently has an Instagram account. The question was raised as to why none of the Commission's activities have been posted on Instagram. It was mentioned that the Commission will see if the youth commissioner would be interested in posting and handling Instagram. Chair Kramer is drafting an agreement. The City Attorney will provide information on the matter and will have something in writing prior to October so that the Commission can bring it to vote. It was noted that City staff can assist with Instagram but are not primarily responsible.

#### 5. 50th ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATES

Debra Evans shared that the Commission could serve alcohol at their anniversary event and would need an ABC license. *Volunteer to Lead Planning Committee:* The Commission was asked to identify two individuals to co-organize the planning to ensure subcommittees are meeting and to coordinate the moving parts. **Action Item: The next 50th Anniversary Subcommittee meeting will be held Tuesday, September 26th at Commissioner Hutchinson's club room. Action Item: Second Vice Chair will get back to the Commission on why there were no Instagram posts.**

## 6. UPCOMING EVENTS THAT REQUIRE VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

*Alexandria Celebrates Women!* is hosting *Arts on the Avenue*, Saturday, October 7th, from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Mt. Vernon Avenue. It was suggested to have two shifts to help with pumpkin painting for the children. The following Commissioners signed up for shifts:

- Second Vice Chair Brown (tentative)
- Commissioner Witkin 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Commissioner Eckert 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Commissioner Stowe 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The Silent Witness Vigil will be held on Thursday, October 12th at Market Square from 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.; 6 – 6:30 p.m. will be the private viewing. Assistance is needed to hand out candles and programs, collecting candles; lighting the candle for each family after their story is read. Commissioner Wetmore will put these events on the Commission's shared calendar. The following Commissioners volunteered to assist:

- Commissioner Stowe
- Commissioner Eckert
- Commissioner Palmer Johnson (will see if she can bring a group)
- Commissioner Witkin (tentative)

It was noted that the Domestic Violence Program will hold the T-shirt Project at different locations in the City.

## 7. REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS

- *Affordable Housing & Transportation* –It was announced that the Affordable Housing & Transportation Subcommittee will host a hybrid webinar event entitled, *Can I Afford to Live in Alexandria?* The date and time are Tuesday, October 10, 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Rm. 2000, City Hall. There will be four speakers and one moderator. The information was placed on the Commission's calendar. However, due to the need to have Councilmember's attendance, the date may be changed.  
**Action Item: Chair Brown requested that this event date be tabled until she hears from the subcommittee on Councilmen John Chapman and Canek Aguirre's attendance and if there will be a new date. Action item: If this meeting does not take place, the Commission will still hold the regular monthly meeting in Room 2000, City Hall at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 10th.**
- *DASH Representative Report Out* – Sunday, October 1st will be a Super Mario Cart obstacle course for DASH Buses, a picnic takes place afterward. Information on the event will be sent to Commissioners.

- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking: The events for Domestic Violence Awareness Month include the placement of purple and silver pinwheels being set throughout the City, T-shirt Project and the Silent Witness Vigil. Coffee sleeves will be dropped off at the local coffee shops (the sleeves have domestic violence and sexual assault information).. The Children’s Holiday Party will take place on December 14th at First Baptist Church. **Action Item: The Commission will discuss volunteer information in the October and November meetings.**
- Reproductive Rights – Grayson County is having a public hearing on their Anti-Abortion Ordinance Proposal. A live sign-on petition and a sign-on letter of opposition will be sent to the Commissioners. Grayson County is criminalizing receiving abortion medication through the mail. The petition is open until December 14th, the date of the hearing. Commissioner Witkin motioned to refer this subject to the Reproductive Subcommittee so they can draft their own letter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jiang. **Action Item: The sign-on letter and petition will be sent out by Debra Evans.**
- Commissioner/City Council Engagement: Commissioner Worner will be volunteering Saturday, September 16th with Councilman Kirk McPike. Councilman McPike will be working on the rainbow crosswalk Saturday, September 16th.  
Vice Mayor Amy Jackson is going to be one of the supporters for the National Center of Women’s Innovations. Their Gala is on Friday, October 27th at the Ritz Carlton in Arlington. **Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will send out sponsorship information to the Commission.**
- Commission on Aging: No report at this time.
- Human Rights (HR) Commission: The HR Commission is hosting a webinar entitled *New Developments and Civil Rights* in partnership with the Legal Employment Opportunity Commission next Tuesday, September 19th, 6:50 p.m. They will discuss the Supreme Court’s decisions on affirmative action and other topics. **Action Item: The flyer for this event will be sent to the Commission by Debra Evans.**
- HIV/AIDS Commission – The HIV/AIDS Commission will meet next Tuesday, September 19th. No report at this time.
- DVP/SAC Wishlist - [https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry\\_custom\\_url&type=CHARITY](https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry_custom_url&type=CHARITY)

### **Next Steps/Adjournment**

Second Vice Chair Brown adjourned the Commission meeting to subcommittee meetings at 8:31 p.m. Commissioner Witkin so moved. Commissioner Worner seconded the motion.