

**ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
MEETING NOTES  
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024  
301 KING STREET  
7 PM**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Anuja Miner (1 excused absence)	T. Nicole Hutchinson	Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin
Jennifer “Jenn” Stowe	Rachel Brill-Meckler	Yvette Jiang
Matthew Worner (1 excused absence)	(2 excused absences)	Kendra Green
Lexi White (1 excused absence)	Jennifer Wetmore (1 excused absence)	Shelley Brown (2 excused absences)
Elisabeth “PJ” Palmer Johnson (1 excused absence)	Crystal Kramer (2 excused absences)	Emily Eckert (1 excused absences)

**ABSENT:**

Nia Miller (2 excused absences)

**STAFF:**

Debra Evans  
LaTanya Chinagorom

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

None.

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kramer welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

The February meeting minutes were approved as amended.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE - EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS (MAY 2024)**

The Commission for Women will make nominations for a new Executive Board, which consists of Chair, First Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair, and Immediate Past Chair, from March – April 2024. Votes can take place only if a quorum is in the room. Commissioner Palmer Johnson volunteered to coordinate the elections of 2024.

**EVENT PROTOCOL**

The Commission for Women will coordinate event dates and times with City Staff.

**Action Items: 1) Commissioners were asked to be mindful of the optics and perception of their flyers. Commissioner Eckert will inform guests on their attendance and will get a**

replacement for Councilperson Gaskins. 2) **Action Item: Commissioner White will contact the National Birth Equity Collaborative for a speaker.** 3) **Action Item: Chair Kramer will contact the City Attorney's Office on the Commission's branding of flyers.** 4) **Action Item: The Commission will revisit how the subcommittees are structured and get community input on what the top issues are.**

## **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

*Draft Proclamation and Reception:* The proclamation was drafted, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event is not until September 24, 2024. It was agreed to have the event on a small scale and to host it at 5:30 p.m. (before the proclamation). Cookies and beverages will be served for the reception. The Commission suggested having a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary pin. All agreed to table the candidate forum until the next meeting. **Action Items: 1) Table the discussion on the proclamation for the next meeting. 2) Commissioners will reach out to local businesses for donations to the domestic violence shelter. 3) The Vola Lawson Lobby at 301 King St was reserved by Debra Evans from 4 – 8 p.m. 4) Commissioner Green will check with her job on funding.**

## **UPDATES ON ACFW EVENTS**

**The Commission for Women Black Maternal Health Webinar:** Thursday, April 4, 7pm, The flyer has been prepared. Tied into Black Maternal Health Week is an event that will be held on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, Birth In Color, an advocacy organization, is hosting a community baby shower at the Mark Center (Del Pepper Community Center). **Action Item: Commissioner Eckert will send an email to the Commission and will see if people are asked to contribute.**

**Domestic Violence Bookmarks at Alexandria Metro stations:** Commissioners were asked to respond to let the group know if they will be available to hand out bookmarks. It was suggested that they go to the ALIVE! food hub in Van Dorn to share the bookmarks. **Action Items: 1) All were asked to respond as to whether they can participate in handing them out. 2) Debra Evans will share bookmarks and will give some of the bookmarks to the HR office. 3) The Commission will reach out to the Rotary Club for help in distributing the bookmarks.**

## **REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS**

The Commission liaisons and subcommittees reported on the following:

*Affordable Housing & Transportation* – The subcommittee invited Helen McElvey to speak and has availability for a May 2024 Tuesday session. They were getting citizen input at City Hall about affordable housing. The City may raise the property tax. **Action Item: Chair Kramer will put the meeting with Helen McElvey forward to the Executive Board.**

*Survivor Support* – There is a potential event by an Alexandria City resident, Dimple Davalia, who gives leadership training and provides help in how those in service areas can keep their own mental health and wellbeing. Commission Wetmore met with her and discussed hosting a

fireside chat (availability in May 2024). **Action Item: Commissioner Wetmore will send Ms. Davalia's information to Chair Kramer who will send it to the Commission.**

*Reproductive Rights* – The legislative session has ended and will reconvene on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Bills are revisited by legislature. The Contraceptive Equity Act eliminates cost barriers to contraceptive care. This act eliminates co-pays and cost-sharing and administrative barriers in getting timely contraceptive coverage and reimbursement. It was sent back to the Governor for religious and ethical exemption language. Commissioner White Repro rising offered her a new role as Director of State Strategies and will be working with multiple states and state issues.

*Human Rights Commission* – There were thirty attendees at the Human Rights Commission Executive Committee meeting. AT the meeting they decided to endorse Congressman Byers for a ceasefire. Commissions do not have the power to make resolutions and cannot send them to City Council. The Human Rights Commission met on February 20<sup>th</sup>, their guests were Debra Evans and Erika Callaway-Kleiner. Asked LGBTQ students to speak on issues. They feel they do not have proper restrooms. They put the restrooms on the top floor of the school. If they go to the restrooms, they will be late for classes. The next meeting, they invited ARHA to speak on the edict that one could not wear a hoodie (the ARHA immediately rescinded the edict.) The Alexandria Police Department went door to door to let people know they are getting to citizens that it was not correct. **Action Item: Debra Evans was asked to speak at the Human Rights Commission. Action Item: They are sending a letter to the City Council.**

HIV Commission – Two members were added to the Commission. They are rebranding the Commission to be more of an LGBTQ brand. Commissioner Hutchinson wishes to discuss her continuing with this commission. She will attend the next meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>. There is an ARHA vacancy for a citizen member. **Action Item: She asked if the Commission could take a look at the liaise commissions to ensure they are the correct ones they should liaise with.**

*DASH* – DASH celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary event at the Masonic Temple; they recognized staff members. In 2023, they had 4.5 million in ridership. Pop up events will be at metro stations to celebrate ridership. Please see the [DASH Report](#) at the end of the minutes. **Action Item: The Director of Housing will come to the Commission for Women meeting to speak in May 2024.**

*Commissioner/City Council Engagement* – There is a need for a commissioner to liaise with Vice Mayor Amy Jackson. Currently the liaise is Commissioner Wetmore. **Action Item: Commissioner Wetmore will let Vice Mayor Jackson know why she is not continuing in this post. Commissioner White agreed to be the new liaison for Vice Mayor Amy Jackson.**

Commissioner Palmer Johnson met with City Councilperson McPike twice this month. His aide

is going to write up information on a meeting that she was not able to attend. **Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will give a report at the next Commission for Women meeting.**

#### **NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM. The subcommittees met after this meeting.