

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

May 11, 2023

*In person Meeting at The Landing in Potomac Yards
4-6 PM*

Members Physically Present: Chair, Michael Schuster; Barbara D'Agostino, Barbara Huelat, Mary Lee Anderson, Caneck Aquirre, Ray Biegun, Enid Borden, Bill Campbell, Kathleen Demik, Alan Dinsmore, Jessica Lefevre, Jim Lindsay, Thomas Reeder, Gerri Wallace.

Members Attending Remotely for Medical Reasons or Person Reasons: Joanne Broderick, David Kaplan

Members Excused: Lois Steele, Jenn Stowe

Members Absent: Joy Kone

Liaisons Present: Ian Torrance, Alexandria Police Department; Juanita Balenger, St. Martin de Porres Senior Center; Pamela Guerra, Senior Center @ Charles Houston; Darrell Wesley.

Guests Present: Bob Eiffiert, Marshall Hespe, Jan Macidull

Staff Members Present: Chris Moore, Ashley Johnson, Pam Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services; Ashley Sellman, Workforce Development Center

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Michael Schuster called the January meeting of the Commission on Aging ("COA") to order at 4:02 PM.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda for the meeting was approved.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the April 13th meeting were approved.
4. **Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report.** Sgt. Torrance discussed an issue involving Fort Ward Park.
5. **Special Presentations:** Mary Horner, Housing Justice Senior Staff Attorney, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, made a presentation on evictions in Alexandria. She noted that it took approximately 60 days – from the time rent is due to the actual removal of someone from their home. She mentioned possible legal defenses, such as a defectively written writ of detainer or that the tenant had paid all that was due at the time of the court hearing. She said that 97% of the eviction cases are for unpaid rent, and that only about 20% of tenants receive legal information before attending a court hearing. Most of the

eviction filings are from West Alexandria, particularly Southern Towers, off of Beauregard and Seminary Roads. The vast majority of the eviction filings involve people of color. Finally, she cited various eviction preventive measures such as outreach in both the court and community, and hearings on writs before they can be issued. The General Assembly passed legislation that allows tenants to expunge their record of an eviction filing if they had their case or cases dismissed because they fully paid the rent due at the time of the hearing. This ensures that the tenant has a clean record to rent elsewhere in the future.

6. **Executive Committee Report.** The draft of the minutes from the meeting on May 1, 2023 were attached as part of the agenda. Michael welcomed the new commissioners, Enid Borden, Kathleen Demik, and James T. Bruen (absent).

7. **Discussion/Action Items:**
 - **Covid-19 Updates** – Gerri Wallace gave her report. The transmission rate in Alexandria continues to be low. Eighty-one percent of Alexandrians are fully vaccinated, and 87% are partially vaccinated. Ninety-five percent of Virginians 65 and older have been vaccinated. Since the beginning of the pandemic, at least 1 in 688 residents have died of Covid-19, for a total of 232 deaths. She also gave information about the rollout of the second bivalent booster.
 - **Election of New Officers** – Jessica Leferve presented the nominees from the Nominating Committee: Michael Schuster, Chair; Barbara D’Agostino, Vice Chair; Tom Reeder, Secretary. Bill Campbell made a motion to move forward these nominations; Jessica seconded the motion. The motion approving these nominations pass unanimously.

 - **Age Friendly Plan** – No update as Jane King was not present at this time.
 - **City Budget Process**- Michael reported that the \$19,000 to cover the gap in Older American Act funds, or to be used to eliminate the waiting list for personal care services is part of the final budget that the Council approved. He also noted that the final budget includes over \$200,000 for one-time emergency rent relief. Canek Aguirre mentioned additional funding for the City’s public libraries.

8. **Liaison Reports**
 - a. **Division of Aging and Adult Services** (<https://www.alexandriava.gov/Aging>) – Chris reported on DAAS’ farm nutrition coupon program. DAAS is proud to announce that we’ll be participating in the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program this year. This federally-funded program allows low income older adults (age 60 and older) to obtain vouchers worth \$50 that can be used at eligible Farmers’ Markets throughout the State. Vouchers will be available June 1 by contacting DAAS at 703-746-5999. Ashley reminded members of their movie at the Lee Center on May 30th: “The Age of Loving.”

- b. **INOVA Alexandria Hospital**- no one present to report.
- c. **Arlington legislative committee meeting** – The committee met on May 8th to discuss the upcoming NVAN events – the Arlington/Alexandria Legislative Forum in November, and the NVAN Legislative Breakfast in September. The members also discussed the newly approved Arlington County budget.
- d. **Human Rights Commission** – Tom Reeder. Tom discussed the Commission’s current activities. The Commission heard from Kim Neal, the City’s Independent Police Auditor. June is Pride Month, with a kick-off event at Market Square Saturday, June 3, 2-5 pm.
- e. **At Home Alexandria (AHA)**- Bob mentioned the AHA moderated interview of Mayor Justin Wilson at 5:00 p.m.
- f. **Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria**- Joanne Broderick – Joanne discussed a review of the CHIP, and an update on healthy and safe homes.
- g. **AARP** – Nothing to report.
- h. **NVAN** – At the May 16th meeting, NVAN will approve the three NVAN Legislative and three NVAN budget priorities for the 2024 General Assembly session.
- i. **St. Martin de Porres Senior Center** – Juanita Balenger, the new director of the Center, said she has been busy with various field trips and the Center has planted a new herb garden. Their trip to Washington, D.C. included viewing the Cherry Blossoms, and visiting the Martin Luther King, Jr., and FDR memorials.
- j. **Senior Center at Charles Houston** – Pamela Guerra, nothing else to add.
- k. **Senior Services of Alexandria** - Mary Lee Anderson- Mary Lee said that the Health Fair will be on May 18th at the Lee Center. Free health screenings and Covid boosters will be available. SSA just completed another Senior Ambassador training. They now have over 130 trained ambassadors. The May 9th Robust Walkathon at Brenman Park was cancelled due to inclement weather and will be rescheduled for later in the month. On May 17th, from 9:00 to 4:00, SSA will hold an open house for its 55th year anniversary. The Senior Law Fair will be on June 3rd, and the theme will be “Expect the Unexpected - When Life Throws You a Curveball.”
- l. **Northern Virginia Fall Prevention Alliance, NVFPA**. Mary Lee Anderson said there nothing to report.
- m. **Alexandria Commission on Employment**. Mary Lee Anderson
- n. **Successful Aging** – Mary Lee handed out three fliers, including the Senior Health and

Fitness Fair, Senior Mental Health, and Senior Law Day. Woodbine provides a Guided Meditation Program, and the Health Department provides a Booster Clinic.

- o. **Alexandria Adult Day Services Center, ADSC** – Darrell Wesley was not able to give his report due to a computer glitch.
 - p. **Economic Development Committee.** Mary Lee Anderson reported on new WDC programs.
 - q. **Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, AHAAC** – Jan Macidull. Nothing new to report.
 - r. **Commission for Women-** Jenn Stowe was absent.
 - s. **Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities.** – Nothing to report.
9. **Committee Updates.**
- a. **Outreach.** The Committee – Co-Chair Ray Biegun and Barbara D’Agostino reported. The committee did not meet.
 - b. **Transportation** – Co-Chairs David Kaplan & Bill Campbell. Nothing to report.
 - c. **Housing Committee-** The Committee on April 17th met at The View, part of Goodwin Living, which focused on affordable assisted living units there. The next meeting will be on May 15th at Duncan Library.
 - d. **Health/Dementia Friendly.** Barbara Huelat – –Next meeting will be held on the last Thursday of the month, May 25, at 4:00 pm at the Goodwin House.
10. **Other Business.** None
11. **New Business.** Mary Lee invited the Commission to SSA’s 55th Anniversary Open House on May 17th, 9:00-4:00 p.m.
12. **Public Comments.** None
13. **Meeting Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

The minutes will be presented for approval at the COA meeting on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at the Landing.

February COA Meeting: at The Landing on June 8th, 2023.

The next Executive Committee meeting date is TBD (since it falls on Memorial Day), at the Landing.

Minutes prepared by Michael Schuster, Chair and Barbara Huelat, Secretary.

