

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*  
*Alexandria Beautification Commission (ABC)*  
*P.O. Box 178*  
*Alexandria, Virginia 22313*

**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, January 13th, 2022  
7:34 PM

Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Steve Cohen (Chair), Julie Chapman (Secretary), Kathryn Chiasson, Richard Dorrier, Eleanor Quigley, Denise Tennant, Chirag Mapara, Thomas McChesney, Monica Murphy, Michael Budinski, Kathryn Hartka.

**Excused Absences:** Emily Freeland.

**Unexcused Absences:** None.

**City Staff:** Oscar Mendoza.

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM.

1. **Virtual Meeting Legal Requirements** - The Chair read the State of Emergency Declaration.
2. **Approval of the November 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes**
  - a. Thomas McChesney motioned to approve the minutes, Julie Chapman seconded, unanimous approval.
3. **Membership Updates**
  - a. Thank you to Kathryn Chiasson for her outstanding leadership role as Chair of the BC last year.
  - b. Karim Eskaf notified the Commission that he needs to step down from participation on the Commission, and Steve acknowledged his excellent contributions.
  - c. Kathryn Hartka joined the Commission as this is her first meeting. She moved to Alexandria in April 2021, and excited to be part of the Commission.
  - d. Three-four positions still exist for new members of the Commission.
4. **Commission Business**
  - a. Commission Goal for 2022: Invite Speakers to present to at Commission Meetings
  - b. Tonight's Speaker: Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director of RPCA and leads City's Office of the Arts (including overseeing the Torpedo Factory) presented on the topic of how public art intersects with the Beautification Commission efforts.

- i. The Office of the Arts conducts an annual planning process and develops the Public Art Implementation Plan and Policy which can be found online at [www.alexandriava.gov](http://www.alexandriava.gov). Every five years, the City conducts an assessment of artwork condition and plans for necessary refurbishments. The City Commission of the Arts is a 16 Member Commission who works closely with the Office of the Arts.
  
- ii. Four ways public art happens in the City:
  1. City Commissions Public Art: City conducts an annual planning process that looks ahead 3 years and searches City-wide for possible candidates. The annual budget is \$250,000, and this includes permanent and temporary public art projects. Each project has an unique task force that oversees all aspects of the process from goal setting, to artist selection, concept design, installation, etc.
  2. Public Art in Private Development: Provisions exist for new developments to provide public art on site. In some instances the developer provides payment in lieu which goes into a public art fund for permanent art works, and the City keeps the funds in the small area where the development exists.
  3. Community Initiated Public Spaces: The City has provisions and processes in place to address and act on ideas presented to the City. Ex: VA Tech students tagged trees up and down Prince Street.
  4. Community Initiated Projects on Private Spaces: An example are the recent murals initiated by local businesses. Murals are no longer considered signage, and the City works with area businesses to ensure they adhere to City standards.
  
- iii. Recent Public Projects
  1. *Confluent Threads* at Burke Branch Library by Project One Studio
    - a. <https://apps.alexandriava.gov/Calendar/Detail.aspx?si=37993>
  2. *Flock* by Christina Fletcher at Holmes Run Trail
    - a. <https://thezebra.org/2021/04/05/walking-in-a-woodland-wonderland/>
  3. *Site See: New Views* temporary installations at Waterfront Park
    - a. <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/public-art/>
  4. Public Art Residency with Alex Renew and artist sTo Len
    - a. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/arts/info/default.aspx?id=107187>

iv. Recent Private Development Project

1. *Plinth* by Tom Fruin;
  - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X317G4BnyqQ>
2. *Roundel* by Joe O'Connell and Creative Machines
  - a. <https://www.creativemachines.com/our-story>
3. *The Event* by David Smedley
  - a. [https://sarahrosepr.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/073\\_NorthernVirginia.pdf](https://sarahrosepr.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/073_NorthernVirginia.pdf)
4. *Last Summer* by Alma Selimovic
  - a. <https://www.alxnow.com/2019/11/19/three-pieces-of-public-art-debut-at-incoming-west-end-apartment-complex/>
5. *En Pointe* by Harry McDaniel
  - a. <https://www.harrymcdaniel.com/works/EnPointe.html>

v. Upcoming Public Projects

1. Beatrice Coron at Colasanto Spray Park
  - a. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=124101>
2. Eto Otitigbe at Wilkes Street Park
  - a. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=120405>
3. R&R Studio at Waterfront Park
  - a. <https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/lifestyle/new-waterfront-park-art-randr-studios-i-love-you-2022/>

vi. 'Steve put forth the idea of using art images in beautification projects.

Dianne recommended that the BC bring forth ideas that make sense for beautification projects, and the City of the Arts will add it to their list for review. Public art can only happen on City property, not private property.

**5. Subcommittee Updates**

a. Awards and Outreach

i. Timeline

1. Slight delay in notifying public, but information is due to go out beginning 1/14/22.

ii. Three Award Cycle Plan

1. January-March: Architecture; all Commission members expected to submit one nomination for a City property for work done in the past five years; can be residential, commercial, historic preservation; big/small; aim for geographic diversity. Emily

(architect) will draft suggested language about what type of things we should look for with regard to nominations, and this information will be sent soon to all BC members.

2. April-June: Residential
3. October-December: Community

iii. Proposed Architecture Awards Calendar

1. January 4: Nominations Open
2. January 20: Nominations Closes
3. January 21: Voting Begins
4. February 6: Voting Closes
5. February 7: Votes Are Tabulated
6. February 8: Sub-committee Reviews
7. February 10: Full Commission Approves Slate
8. March (date): Winners Notified

b. Sustainable Landscaping Sub-Committee

i. Training Development

1. The subcommittee is creating a training program (to include a power point presentation) for Bright View to teach workers and others about native plants.

ii. New Gateway Signage Possible in 2022

1. The City has initiated a process for replacing new signs at gateways. This could impact landscaping around gateways, and we may need to play a role in this process. The City has also done additional plantings around the gateways.

c. Vacant Lots

- i. No updates as Sub Committee hasn't been able to meet.

**6. New Commission Business**

a. Definition of Commission Success

- i. Steve opened a discussion for how the Commission could define its goals for 2022. Steve asked that subcommittees discuss quantitative/qualitative goals for 2022 and present ideas at the next Commission meeting.
- ii. Thomas suggested that each subcommittee also restate their Committee's overall objective in addition to providing goals. All agreed.

b. Commission Communication

- i. Steve asked the BC to explore opportunities for public communication via public channels such as Instagram, Facebook, events, etc. Steve suggests

creating a communication plan that identifies messages helpful for the public (ex: proper pruning techniques, info on native plants, best practices, factoids, relevant data, etc.).

- ii. Steve noted that the effort would require a communication plan that would include social media, etc. He asked members to consider working on the plan; Julie offered to spearhead the effort after April, and Thomas, Steve, and Kathryn Hartka also volunteered.
- iii. Thomas offered to enlist his social team to provide advice as well. It was also suggested that each subcommittee offer messages relevant to their work.
- iv. Steve asked each subcommittee to come up with a few points to amplify their area.
- v. Oscar said that he'd look for a list of organizations working on behalf of beautification activities and events.

**7. Agenda Items for the Thursday, February Meeting**

- a. Each subcommittee presents the committee's objective, goals, and 2-3 message points at the BC February meeting.

**8. Public Comment/Discussion**

- a. None

**9. The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:55 PM.**