

## **Minutes**

**Thursday** June 30, 2022

Present

Canek Aguirre - City Council Member

Alyia Gaskins - City Council Member

Jim Dillon - Chair

Marilyn Cruz - Vice Chair

Thomas Walczykoski - Citizen At-Large

Steve Nelson - African American Community Representative

Bryan Kirkes - Citizen At-Large

Noraine Buttar - City Mangers' Representative/DCHS

Lisette Torres - DCHC

Lt. Jerry Newcomb - APD

Det. Trevor Griffin - APD

Deputy Joseph Runquist - Alexandria Sheriff's Office

Deputy Carlos Canas

Kate Reen - NVFS

Mike Mackey - Director CSU

Michael Johnson - RPCA

Percy White - Gang Task Force Coordinator

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Charles Houston Recreation Center 901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

**1. Welcome and Introductions:** all present were invited to introduce themselves and their affiliation with the Gang

Prevention Community Task Force.

2. Public Comment – no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes – after having been properly moved and seconded, the minutes from April 7, 2022, were

approved.

4. Review Written Report – to augment written information, those providing reports were individually asked to provide

additional verbal updates and questions were entertained.

Alexandria Police had nothing to add.

A question was asked regarding whether social media is monitored (yes, through law enforcement, probation/parole).

A question was asked as to whether it is predicted that crime will increase over the summer (it may).

Commonwealth Attorney's Office has 2 gang cases.

CSU informed 7 youth on probation/parole deemed gang involved. This number is consistent with previous reports.

A question was posed relative to youth who are having difficulty such as running away. Mike Mackey explained

referrals may come from a variety of sources, to include parents notifying law enforcement or other

community/school partners. Child in Need of Supervision youth may be brought before the Court; however, the

goal is always to secure support and services prior to Court involvement.

A question was asked regarding ACPS and Truancy Outreach – Ms. Hope Murphy remains the Truancy Outreach

Specialist.

City Manager's Office – Noraine Buttar recommended the group review the results from the 2022 Developmental

Assets Survey.

The Gang Prevention Coordinator continues to conduct outreach, e.g., with the Department of Recreation, Parks &

Cultural Activities (DPCA).

Michael Johnson from DPCA announced a number of pro-social, youth-engagement initiatives that are occurring in

July and August. This information will be shared electronically.

Mr. Johnson was asked whether there are enough lifeguards at this time. He stated that they will have lifeguards.

A question was asked of Michael relative to what is needed at this time (for youth, e.g., money, volunteers). Michael

responded that all of the above is needed and more hands-on engagement.

Noraine noted that a critical element is the existence of relationships with youth. Michael added that the problem is

all of ours and questioned our engagement and interest relative to times past.

Deputy Runquist, who has served roughly a decade on the Task Force and will be phasing out in this role, suggested

more activities such as football camps and soccer tournaments. His replacement will be Deputy Carlos Canas.

Deputy Canas informed inmates are younger and there is an orientation in connection with music.

A question was posed relative to the population of gang members at the adult detention center. A lower percentage of

this number are local inmates. A larger discussion including Sheriff Casey occurred relative to local and federal

inmates, including the processes of how each inmate is addressed and gang matters mitigated. It was reiterated that

music seems to be a trend within gangs and is seen as a lucrative area. Sports for all was recommended, as well as

treating all equally (as an example of how to help).

Deputy Runquist recommended that people consider attending the Virginia Gang Investigators Association training

(link to be shared).

The gang Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) program was discussed and explained. There are currently 17

youth on the waiting list. Ms. Reen was asked if more resources (e.g., more staff) could help alleviate the wait list

(yes).

Additional questions included whether there is extortion (at the high school). APD reported this is not being seen.

There is information relative to the existence of members within groups, for example, those deemed “day laborers”.

As to whether there are enterprises, specifically, no direct ties were reported.

**5. Election of leadership** – following discussion regarding which members had been approached relative to leadership

(Mr. Dillon, Ms. Nevy-Cruz, Mr. Walczykowski, Mr. Nelson), Mr. Dillon was confirmed as Chair and Ms. Nevy-Cruz

confirmed as Vice Chair. There was no appointment relative to Secretary, a role Mr. White will serve in his capacity

as Coordinator.

**6. Regional Gang Task Force** – a review of the history and status of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force

was provided by APD, the Sheriff’s Office and Court Service Unit. The regional task force continues to operate.

Alexandria is a part of the FBI Task Force. Some distinction relative to the regional gang task force’s focus (e.g.,

Loudoun County) was shared.

7. Task Force Strategic Plan - Ms. Buttar and Ms. Torres led the group in processing further work into its strategic

planning.

*The Task Force Mission Statement* - Create a gang free community through collaboration, community outreach and

advocacy.

*The Task Force Vision* - Safety, Support, and Opportunity for All.

8. Additional discussion matters and action items – the Task Force discussed possibility meeting in late July/early

August. Mr. White will poll the group to determine a date and continue the positive energy and work.

Next Steps and Adjourn – the chair processed the adjournment of the meeting at 8:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Percy White

Gang Prevention Coordinator