

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING
Meeting: Thursday, February 8, 2024

Del Pepper Community Resource Center, Room 9208

Minutes

This meeting was recorded.

Commissioners Physically Present: Michael Schuster (Chairman) Canek Aguirre, Enid Borden, James Bruen, Barbara D'Agostino, Kathleen Demik, Alan Dinsmore, Marshall Hespe, Jessica Lefevre, James Lindsay Victoria Rutson, Tom Reeder, Ana Rivas-Beck, Jeanette Shepherd, Lois Steele, Gerri Wallace,

Members Participating by Videoconference: Ray Biegun, David Kaplan, Barbara Huelat

Members Absent: Joy Kone, Jane King, Jen Stowe

Liaisons Participating in Person: Bob Eifert, At Home Alexandria, Cathy Turner, VHC Health.

Liaisons and City Staff Participating by Videoconference: Juanita Balenger, St. Martins *de Porres* Senior Center, Darrell Wesley, Adult Day Services Center, Ian Torrance, Alexandria City Police Department, Pam Guerra, Senior Center at Charles Houston, Jan Macidull, Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, Chris Moore, Director, Division of Aging and Adult Services.

City Staff Present: Ashley Johnson and Pamela Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services, Harold Little, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

Members of the Public Participating by Videoconference: Gaynelle Diaz, Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Cedar Dvorin.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:06

The proposed agenda was unanimously approved.

The draft minutes of the meeting of December 14, 2023, were unanimously approved.

Sergeant Torrance was present as liaison for the Alexandria City Police Department. In response to a question, he indicated that February 8 was the deadline for applying for the Community Police Academy.

Alexandria City Manager James Parajon made a special presentation on the proposed MonumentalAlex development at Potomac Yard. He discussed various topics and addressed questions from Commissioners on issues such as the effect of the development on transportation in the area and road and metro improvements that would be needed, the effect on housing in Alexandria, Alexandria's cooperation with Arlington County, the effect on the city's tax base and outlays, the effect on employment, the governing board of the Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority, environmental effects, and non-relocation terms of the agreement with Monumental Sports. The City Manager and Councilmember Canek Aguirre referred the COA to MonumentalAlx.com for additional information, including site plans.

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Kathleen Demik discussed a draft letter to the City Council regarding the Ladrey redevelopment. Specifically, the letter addresses complaints from residents of Annie B. Rose at the January 4 meeting of the City Council and their discussion of the Ladrey Redevelopment Plan. She noted that there were concerns from residents of Annie B. Rose House and questions about the experience of the contractor used to work on living arrangements of Ladrey residents during the redevelopment. She indicated that there would be quarterly reporting regarding the process.

The Chairman stated that the Age Friendly Plan report was essentially finished and about 100 copies would be produced for the purpose of getting approval by the City Council before presenting it to AARP.

The Chairman indicated that future proposed agendas would provide for liaison reports being before the Discussion/Action Items instead of after them.

The Chairman reminded Commissioners to review the Commission's remote participation policy and to suggest any needed changes that would be consistent with rules under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

The Chairman indicated that the Northern Virginia Aging Network would be meeting on March 16, and that the Alexandria COA would be the convener for the meeting.

On behalf of the Alexandria Task Group of Dementia Friendly America, Ray Biegun indicated that they would be able to present a one-hour information session to Commissioners. The Chairman indicated that such a program would be held during the hour before the March meeting.

Ashley Johnson indicated that there would be a central email address (agingcommission@alexandriava.gov) that Commissioners and liaisons could use to submit reports, minutes, agendas, and the like. It is solely for Commissioners to use to communicate with City staff. The second half of the Aging Summit will be held on February 9.

Tom Reeder reported that the Human Rights Commission continues to examine the effect of the Israel-Hamas war on Alexandrians and the proposal to present a recommendation to the City Council.

Bob Eifert asked that an Advocacy Committee be appointed to regarding the City's annual budget, which will be considered before the next Commission meeting. The Chairman indicated that would be discussed during the Committee reports. On behalf of At Home in Alexandria, Bob Eifert reported that there would be a screening of "Saving Claire" on February 21 at 1 p.m. at Beatley Central Library. The film is a documentary that explores factors that increase fall risk. The event is cosponsored by At Home in Alexandria, the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance, and Senior Services of Alexandria and the film will be followed by a discussion. Bob also gave information about several February AHA events, including a program entitled "Finishing Strong: Manage the Hospital Stay. Alan Dinsmore provided details on that program, which will be held on February 16 at 2 p.m. at Portner's Landing at 621 North St. Asaph Street.

In addition to her written report, Janita Balenger provided information on the activities of the St. Martins *de Porres* Senior Center, including the return of Jeffrey's food delivery, a program on disabled artist Wes Holloway, a field trips to the Joint Enforcement and Patent and Trademark museums, a presentation by Dr. Polley from INOVA, and an upcoming Valentine's party.

Kathy Turner, Director of Health Promotion and Senior Health Departments at VHC Health, provided information on upcoming cardio health programs. She also indicated that she oversees the Phillips Lifeline program. She indicated that there is a Lifeline assistance fund and further information can be

obtained by contacting seniorhealth@VHChealth.com. She also indicated that there is a senior associates parking rate for people who have frequent visits to VHC.

Pam Guerra indicated that Charles Houston Senior Recreation Center was also very happy that Jeffrey's is back to normal operations and reported on the upcoming Valentine's party, Mardi Gras party, and black history celebration.

Marshall Hesper reported that Jeffrey's pickups are occurring at Chinguapin Recreation Center and that Senior Services of Alexandria was making connections with Ladrey residents to get them qualified for non-traditional Meals on Wheels programs. He announced that SSA's annual Gala would be held on March 16 and discussed the screening of "Saving Claire." He announced a virtual 9-week program sponsored by the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance on falls prevention beginning on February 27. There was a suggestion that people be given instructions on methods of falling that would avoid serious injury and methods of getting up.

On behalf of the Successful Aging Committee, Harold Little indicated that they're getting ready for their Valentine event. He also reminded the Commissioners of the fitness classes at five locations around the City, as well as their preparation for the Dance for All Ages at Alexandria City High School in the spring.

For the Alexandria Adult Day Services Center, Darrell Wesley spoke of preparations for the coming Valentine's party and indicated that six naval officers would be volunteering to help. He also indicated that he was resuming his visits to long term care facilities in Alexandria to assist with struggling caregivers.

Jan Macidull's report from the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee included a discussion of the Committee's meeting on February 1 that included a presentation by Assistant City Manager Sara Taylor on landlord-tenant legislation in the Virginia General Assembly. These included leases in multiple languages, pay-or-quit extended to 14 days, rental stabilization, requirements for payment plans for arrears, a pilot project for the right of counsel for those facing eviction, localities having a right of first refusal when financing is paid off for an affordable housing project, and lease fee transparency. Regarding the most recent Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Annie B. Rose residents had concerns about the Ladrey redevelopment. An ARHA request for a quote has gone out for an undisclosed project, with nine responses, six of which are new developers. ARHA stated its desire to become more involved in the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. They are going to study housing choice voucher programs. The point-in-time unhoused count has recently been completed. Chairman Schuster reported on his meeting with City staff about available affordable units in the Alate and Meridian complexes.

The next meeting of the Housing Committee is February 26.

Marshall Hesper reported that the Outreach Committee's last meeting was recorded. They are moving forward with the mindfulness project. They have sites identified. Dawn Higgins and the Alexandria Arts Alliance have been busy preparing the first two sites. The first one is targeted for April 15. The next scheduled meeting will be on March 21.

Alan Dinsmore reported that the next Transportation Committee meeting would be on February 21 at 4 p.m. at Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Jessica Lefevre reported for the Civic Engagement and Economic Security Committee. They are promoting the Silver Service Card, along with Senior Services of Alexandria. They would be providing materials to the City's Aging and Adult Services Division. The Shark Tank idea is moving forward

with two informational sessions at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on February 15, the first one on the sixth floor of the Del Pepper Center and the second one on Zoom. The Committee has agreed to take up homelessness as an issue.

Barbara Huelat reported that the last meeting of the Health and Dementia Friendly Committee did not achieve a quorum and the next meeting is yet to be scheduled.

Bob Eifert reported that there would be an ad hoc committee that would determine the effects of the City Manager's proposed budget on older Alexandrians, to be released on February 27. The committee would meet during the first week of March with the City's Budget Director. The Committee would then prepare testimony for the City's budget hearings. The Committee would be open to any Commissioner or other interested person.

It was announced that Barbara Huelat will have an article in the February 15 issue of the Alexandria Times on vision health.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

The next meeting of the Commission will be on March 14, 2024, at 4 pm at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center and the next Executive Committee Meeting will be on Monday, March 4, 2024 at 1:30 pm at Goodwin House.