

ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2025  
7:00 p.m.  
Alexandria Black History Museum, 902 Wythe Street

Members Present

Jon Thompson, Chair  
Lisl Brunner  
Matt Harris  
Manisha Maniyar  
Elisabeth "PJ" Palmer Johnson, Vice Chair  
Megan Prince  
Tom Reeder, Jr.  
Conrad Sylvanus

Staff Present

Anna McClure (by phone)

Members Excused

Marc Bendick  
April Breslaw  
Iulia Fratilla  
Sam Schwartz

**1. Call to Order/Introductions**

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**2. Approval of January Minutes**

Upon motion by Commissioner Harris, seconded by Vice Chair Palmer Johnson, the Commission approved minutes of the January meeting. All Commissioners present voted aye.

**3. “DEI: Not DOA” – a discussion with Dr. Emerald Christopher, City of Alexandria Race and Social Equity Officer**

Commissioner Harris and Dr. Emerald Christopher had a discussion regarding the City's diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and similar programs that are implemented in the private sector. Dr. Christopher shared that each department will have Equity Core Teams and will create 2-year Equity Action Plans that will include equity goals and accountability mechanisms. Commissioners and members of the public asked several questions about the possible challenges to these programs and how the City may adapt to protect them.

**4. Executive Committee**

CPRB Ordinance Update

Chair Thompson shared updates on the CPRB ordinance, noting that the revised ordinance proposal should be up for a vote by City Council in April. A workgroup, including two members of Council, is currently working on the ordinance and the issues of subpoena and investigative powers, which the Commission has submitted comments on to Council previously.

Rainbow Crosswalk Update

Commissioner Harris provided an update on his conversations with Lauren Fisher, Del Ray Business Association president, and the Del Ray Chamber of Commerce. There appears to be support for this crosswalk, but money is an issue, and they want to find a way to price.

Immigration

The group discussed the March meeting and the challenges that the City is facing with

immigration issues. Commissioner Reeder reported that he has heard that ICE agents have been seen around the community. There has also been local reporting that small raids have been occurring in Alexandria.

## **5. Old Business & New Business**

### **Board & Commission Chair Meeting**

Acting Director McClure gave a brief update on the Board and Commission Chair meeting. At the meeting, there was a legislative update from Deputy City Manager Alethea Predeoux and an update on the City's response to recent federal actions.

### **Discussion of City Investment Letters**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Prince, seconded by Commissioner Harris, a letter to City Council was introduced for the Commission's consideration recommending that the City review its investments and take steps to divest from any "institutions that are complicit in Israel's actions" in Gaza and Palestine, and remain uninvested from them. After discussion the Commission voted in opposition to sending the letter. Of Commissioners present, 3 voted aye and 4 voted nay, with 1 abstention.

Upon motion by Chair Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Prince, a letter to City Council was introduced for the Commission's consideration recommending that the City review its investments and take steps to divest from "institutions involved in weapons manufacturing and from those whose values conflict with Alexandria's longstanding commitment to human rights." Commissioner Prince moved to amend the letter to include language specifically referencing Palestine and Gaza. After discussion of this amendment, the Commission voted to include this amended language. Of Commissioners present, 5 voted aye and 3 voted nay. The Commission proceeded vote in favor of sending the letter, with the amendments, to City Council. Of Commissioners present, 6 voted aye, with 2 abstentions.

## **6. Liaison Reports**

Liaisons from the Commission for Women, Commission on Aging, Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, and the Economic Opportunities Commission provided updates on the recent work of their commissions.

## **7. Public Comment**

Members of the public gave comments.

## **8. Announcements/Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10 pm.