

ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026
Alexandria Black History Museum
902 Wythe St, Alexandria, VA 22314
7:00 P.M

Members Present

April Breslaw, Vice Chair
Marc Bendick
Lisl Brunner
Iulia Fratila
Manisha Maniyar
Kara Pitek
Megan Prince, participated in the Phone
Elisabeth "PJ" Palmer Johnson
Tom Reeder
Sam Schwartz, Vice Chair
Jon Thompson, Chair

Staff Present

Paul Valenti, Director
Alethea Predeoux, Deputy City Manager
Miladis Martinez Gutierrez, Adm. Support

Members Excused

Matt Harris

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Chair Thompson started the meeting by saying that we had two great speakers with us tonight. Darrlynn Franklin, President of the NAACP Alexandria Branch, and Police Chief Tarrick McGuire of the Alexandria Police Department.

2. Approval of January Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Vice Chair Breslaw, seconded by Commissioner Bendick, the January minutes were approved with a minor change. All Commissioners present voted aye.

**3. Guests: NAACP Alexandria Branch President, Darrlynn Franklin
Chief of the Alexandria Police Department, Tarrick McGuire**

Darrlynn Franklin, NAACP Alexandria Branch President

Darrlynn Franklin explained that their mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

Chair Thompson asked if the NAACP has a sense of or are seeing trends of possible discrimination issues within the black community in certain areas within the city. Ms. Franklin indicated that there were no recent incidents, and referenced several incidents that occurred a few years ago. They drafted press releases stating that discrimination in the city of Alexandria should not be tolerated; and everyone should be treated equally and fairly. We are a city of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

She explained that they have a legal redress committee, because within their branch, they have various programs such as Healthcare, housing, education committee, and each committee is responsible for putting on various programs in those grounds. They have an attorney on the legal redress committee, and they investigate complaints received by their office. She said they have not seen many discrimination cases.

Chair Thompson mentioned that the changes in federal policies with regard to the diversity, equity, and inclusion programs have been under attack, and the city of Alexandria is trying to adapt to make sure our programs do not get impacted. He asks if the NAACP has any idea of what kind of diversity inclusion programs will be most effective, specifically for the Black community and the minority community in general, that the Commission can try to push.

Ms. Franklin stated that DI (Diversity and Inclusion) has impacted this region, and there was a lot of funding cut by DI, and there were a lot of layoffs. She said that what they have done on a local level is to work with the mayor, and they conducted job fairs; at the state level the conducted a town hall meeting with Don Buyer, John Chapman, Julius D. "JD" Spain, Sr. to asked them what was going to happened to housing, what is going to happened to health care, because a lot of people were unemployed.

Chair Thompson requested suggestions so that the Commission could work together with NAACP. Ms. Franklin stated that her recommendation is to strengthen police community relations in Alexandria. This will require a collaboration model in which the City of Alexandria Police Department, the Independent Community Policing Review Board, the Alexandria Human Rights Commission, and the NAACP Alexandria branch work together as unified partners in public safety by establishing structure and recurring dialogue among the four bodies. The City can ensure the community's concern for civil rights protections and policing policy are all considered in shaping policies for the city; joining community forums, sharing data transparency efforts, and all are considered in providing coordinated outreach initiatives.

She stated that the Policing Review Board has monthly meetings, and the Human Rights Commission members are welcome to come to the meetings. She also reported that the NAACP meets on the fourth Thursday of every month and invited commissioners to attend.

Ms. Franklin also explained the process of the MOU between the Policing Review Board and the Police Department. She stated that they do not have subpoena power and explained the process of getting subpoenas. If there are any discrepancies between the Board and the Auditor, the Board will have to go to the City Council, and they will give them a word of "yes or no."

Ms. Franklin also discussed what is happening with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to include Governor Spanberger rescinding Governor Youngkin's Executive Order 47. This order forced state law enforcement to collaborate with (ICE). She said that this impacted African Americans as a whole because she has seen ICE in the City twice, and the majority of people that are being picked up are brown people or people that get in their way.

Chair Thompson thanked Darrlynn Franklin for coming tonight and asked her to inform the Office of Human Rights of any NAACP-hosted events so the Commission can participate. Ms. Franklin said they could invite the commission to one of their meetings.

Police Chief Tarrick McGuire

Police Chief McGuire introduced Chief of Staff, Sasha Rutizer. Chief Rutizer recently joined the Police Department and came from the U.S. Department of Justice, where she was a prosecutor.

Police Chief McGuire gave a brief background of himself and said he was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. He retired as the Assistant Police Chief from Arlington, Texas, after 22 years, and has served as the Alexandria Police Chief since November 2024.

Chair Thompson mentioned that the Commission is aware of the hate crime policy the Police Department issued and said they have some questions about the policy's drafting and implementation. Chair Thompson expressed his and the Commission's appreciation of the policy.

Police Chief McGuire gave a historical background about the policy. He explained that within two and a half years of his police career in Arlington, Texas, he became a detective. He recalled a case that he worked on involving Ms. Silk Littlejohn, which made national headlines. Ms. Littlejohn and her fiancé were building a home, and Ms. Littlejohn was assaulted by a lady with a stick and the lady used racially offensive language towards her. Sometime later, Ms. Littlejohn found racial slurs spray-painted on her garage door.

He stated that he did not understand the significance of hate crimes before and how those things can not only divide a community but can entrench the culture of a community. He explained that they arrested the lady for the assault on Ms. Littlejohn. Once he met with the lady's attorney, who was an older white gentleman, the attorney said to him, "Boy, do you know who I am?" and told him that they needed to release the lady, because she had mental health issues. This caused him to start doing research on the city where he worked. During his search of the names of the streets, he learned that these were families that were deeply entrenched in the history of the city, who owned slaves.

He talked about the difference between hate crimes and hate incidents. He stated that in 2017, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which is located in Alexandria, developed a consortium of police leaders from around the country. They established a human and civil rights committee. When this committee was established, they created a model policy as it relates to how Police should respond to hate crimes and work with prosecution to execute not only the human rights violation, but to ensure they hold them accountable.

Police Chief McGuire stated that when he came to Alexandria, one of his first goals within the 100-day plan was to examine and evaluate departmental policies. He quickly discovered that the City did not have a police department policy related to hate crimes or hate incidents. In Texas, hate crime or prosecution not only includes those of a protected class; but also includes police officers because there was a time when police officer was being ambushed and killed. Police

officers are not considered a protected class in Virginia. He explained that shortly after he was hired as the Alexandria Chief, he assembled a small group of people, and they developed a model policy and requested feedback. He stated that it is important to ensure that the team knows the difference between a hate crime and a hate incident and explained the difference between both of them.

Police Chief McGuire stated that this policy seeks to standardize response protocol in general and to make sure there is adequate supervision as it relates to those types of calls. Chief McGuire requested assistance from this group, because he believes it is important to guide the people about what their expectations are, and discuss how to put the policy into action through educating the community. There was an increase in reporting in Arlington, and the increase in reporting that is not correctly defined can make it appear as though they do not know what is going on in the city.

Police Chief McGuire reported that he was in Richmond a few weeks ago and had the opportunity to speak with the Secretary of Public Safety. Their conversation centered on ensuring his internal team is fully educated, not only on the policy, but in depth about hate crimes and hate incidents. He is seeking guidance from this commission and partner with this commission's availability to achieve the following goals: 1) to help with training development related to the officers, based on the history behind this commission; and 2) to hold training and public education within the community. Once the training is instituted, they seek to then work with the commission to help implement the policy across law enforcement agencies across Virginia.

Chair Thompson stated that the Commission has tried to work more on communication with other city agencies, such as complaints that are received by the Office, but when it comes to things that the Police Department or the Policing Review Board seemed, a lot of times that information is not shared between agencies or groups. The commission can be better at working together with the police department, so the commission shares what the office of human rights is seeing, and the Police Department likewise shares with the Commission what their officers see on the ground.

Police Chief McGuire stated that he is working on is transparency and public-facing information, especially in the areas of use of force and traffic stops. He stated that they are accountable for reporting to the Virginia State Police every year. He added that in Arlington, TX, they annually reported their use of force data and traffic stops data to the NAACP, regardless if the data is good, bad, and different. He said that there is a way for the Department to share information with the Commission, whether it is biannually, if the Commission invites them to a meeting.

Vice Chair Schwartz asked what information he is contemplating releasing, particularly traffic stops. Police Chief McGuire stated that in his previous career, data collection was very important. Specifically, they reported over the reason for the traffic stop, the outcome, the racial profile of the individual stopped, if they were given a citation, and the number of traffic stops. Then a heat ratio that will speak to the search, for example, if they have probable cause to search the vehicle, what was the outcome of the search?

Chair Thompson shared a question that has repeatedly come up from the community about an increase in ICE and Federal Officials doing immigration enforcement within the city. Citizens want to know what they should do if they see ICE officials in the community, and if they see ICE officials acting in a way that might be disturbing. Citizens also want to know if they should be calling the Police Department, and if the department has an internal policy on how to respond when citizens call.

Police Chief McGuire stated that the majority of the police chiefs around the country do not support what we are seeing on national television. He added that he speaks to the police chiefs of the surrounding jurisdictions, and no agencies in this region have signed 287G. He explained that the 287G is an agreement between local law enforcement agencies and the Federal Government to do Immigration enforcement. He stated that the Alexandria Police Department has not and will not sign the 287G.

Police Chief McGuire explained that police departments have Federal partnerships with federal law enforcement agencies, and have police officers that are assigned to what is considered a federal task force. He added that the Marshals Service goes out for the worst of the worst, and so they have resources, and that is why they partner with them in murder cases. He added that they also have additional partnerships with the FBI in solving cybercrimes, and they have arrested people within the city for child sexual exploitation.

He said that in his entire law enforcement career, he has never had a task force officer assigned to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and there are reasons for that: 1) Local Municipal Police Departments have no enforcement authority in relation to Immigration. Alexandria Police Department does not engage in immigration enforcement within the City; and 2) from a human perspective that is not often talked about, they have officers that work in the City whose families are being impacted by immigration enforcement.

He added that in many cases, policing has historically been caught in the middle of politics and the enforcement of law and said that he has cops within the city whose families are going through the same crisis as other members in our community, and they are struggling with this issue. He said that the constitution is very clear: 1) people are afforded due process and 2) their First Amendment rights should be protected. He stated that the behavior that we are seeing from Federal Law Enforcement, he has never experienced in his entire career.

Police Chief McGuire stated that ICE presence is here in Alexandria, but he does not know when they are in the city because he has no communication with them. There are several legal ramifications for local law enforcement; there are three areas in which a president can enact insurrection, which are the following: 1) If there is invasion of the United States; 2) If there is an insurrection of the United States; and 3) If you impede with federal authorities in their performance of their duties, so any municipal police officer by law cannot interfere with immigration enforcement. The Department of Justice has the ability to indict an officer, arrest them, and prosecute them criminally.

Police Chief McGuire informed the Commission that the City is working on protocols and public communications to provide to the public facing in an expeditious amount of time. In the interim,

as relates to a policy for the police Department, the Police Department has already had a policy on this. The current policy relates to what their limited authority is in working with the federal government. Some language was updated to reflect what their policy is, but in the police department's response, it speaks to what their responsibilities are which includes: responding to calls for services, ensuring their body worn cameras are being activated; addressing what they can within the limited scope of their authority, taking appropriate actions; and documenting the need to follow up if they do not have that authority.

He added that as Police Chief, his primary goals are to ensure that officers are fully equipped with the knowledge and the training that they should have to do their job effectively. He also wants people to know that this is a new area for law enforcement nationally. This is a different space, so legal opinions are going to matter as related to responsibilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He added protocols are coming uniformly, but they are also limited to what the law will allow and will not allow them to do.

Chair Thompson asked if it is ok if citizens call the local police department if they see something happening with ICE. Police Chief McGuire stated that they respond to calls for services, but he wants to make a delineation and ensure the appropriate use of their resources. He said that if there is a disturbance or active situation, if it is unknown if it is law enforcement or not, then they are going to respond to that call for services. However, the mere presence of ICE walking on the street or standing on a parking lot will be considered as federal law enforcement within our community.

Following the Police Chief presentation, questions were raised from the commission to include conducting outreach in the community so that members of the community do not feel afraid to call the police. An example was raised that addressed a domestic violence situation, because they are afraid. Police Chief McGuire stated that they reduced crime significantly over the last year, but they have not seen a significant drop in the calls for services.

Other questions from the Commission included: whether the Police Department had thought of the situation if, in the November elections, ICE Agents were deployed to voting facilities. Police Chief said that they have gone through multiple scenarios and said that outside their scope of authority, it is important to know that there is the City Attorney, and they can also seek legal action against the federal government in cases where police authority is limited. He said that local police are not going to show up and fight federal law enforcement.

The Commission asked if something like what happened in Minneapolis happens in Alexandria, what can we expect from the Police? Police Chief McGuire stated that there are multiple layers of response that they have the capability to do. In particular, they have the City's Civil Disturbance unit. A significant amount of their workforce that is trained to respond to this kind of event.

He said that for him this is really about protection, First Amendment rights; ensuring that people can exercise their First Amendment rights, so public recording of the police is lawful. He also added that they have mutual agreements with the surrounding jurisdiction if they need assistance.

The Commission asked if it would be helpful if the Human Rights Commission hosted a forum where he could present the release of use-of-force and traffic stops statistics and asked how the commission could be helpful to him in achieving the goals of better transparency and communication. Police Chief McGuire said that his goal is to ensure that they touch every geographical area of the city. He also wants to ensure that they partner with the correct community segment of the group, and his goal is to educate people. He stated that it is important to document the data the right way and be transparent about it, and understand the interpretation of what the data is, and said that he wants to partner with the Commission.

Chair Thompson stated that it is important to get the legal guidance and get the policy out, and as a commission, they hope that they can work with the police department through sharing information with the public, and the Commission wants to try to do it the best they can. Police

Chief McGuire stated that once the City puts out the information to identify a time for him to come back to speak with more clarity and authority. He stated that the policy will be ready within the next couple of weeks. He stated that he will work through Director Valenti to schedule the commissioner's ride alone. Chair Thompson thanked Police Chief McGuire for coming tonight.

4. Public Comment (3 minutes) – There were no public comments.

5. Executive Committee

Chair Thompson stated that for March, they would like to focus on the Afghan Refugee Community while working through Christ Church. He informed the Commission that he will be out of town for both meetings, and Vice Chair Breslaw and Vice Chair Schwartz will be organizing this.

He added that for April, he wants to get in touch with Kevin Harris, and he wants to see if there is a possibility of doing the Commission meeting at the meeting house for center that ARHA has to focus on affordable housing and the ARHA situation to see if the improvements have been made and to get some of the new Board members to come to talk the commission about what new improvements they are trying to make.

He said that he likes the idea of putting a forum together with the NAACP and also doing additional meetings with the Police Chief once they get more guidance in terms of policy.

6. Old and New Business

Chair Thompson asked everyone for their thoughts about what the Police Chief had to say and what kind of next step they think the commission should take. Commissioner Maniyar stated that part of the issue is also that when TWU conducts its rapid response training, there are four photographs of APD wearing masks in the Chirilagua area, and it starts to spread fear in the community.

Chair Thompson stated that it will be important to send something to Council expressing some of the Commission's concerns and maybe pushing Council to get the City Attorney to look into this

to say what local law enforcement can do; when should they respond, when should they take action, or not when there is an interference with ICE. Commissioner Bendick stated that what needs to be communicated to the City Council is that the Police Department needs guidance, and the guidance needs to maximize the ability of the police to protect citizen rights.

Vice Chair Schwartz said that the Police can, at the very least, turn on their body worn camaras, record the license plates of the vehicles, and record as much as they can of the circumstances.

Director Valenti will try to figure out a better timeline for when the policy will be coming out. After an extensive discussion on this policy, Chair Thompson stated that the commission should draft something for the council to memorialize the conversation with the Police Chief, and then the next part of the letter should state that the commission is concerned with the Police Chief's response to questions regarding how the local police department is to respond to Federal ICE actions within the City. They would like the city to try to get more guidance on how the Police Department can better protect citizens if they see ICE or ICE-affiliated individuals.

Chair Thompson will draft the letter with the help of Vice Chair Schwartz and Vice Chair Breslaw. The letter will be ready by the next Commission meeting.

Chair Thompson stated that a letter has been drafted already to be sent to Police Chief McGuire. Upon a motion by Chair Thompson, seconded by Vice Chair Schwartz, the commission approved to send the letter to the Police Chief; one commissioner abstained.

2040 Housing Plan

Chair Thompson stated that Commissioner Fratila and Vice Chair Schwartz took portions of the 2040 housing master plan to see what areas the commission wants to comment on. He said that he focuses on the homeowner programs and resources project and did not see any new recommendations proposed. He said that he doesn't recall reading about the history of redlining when it came to buying a home.

Commissioner Fratila said that she reviewed some of the different sections, and one thing that came up was protecting and preventing the displacement of individuals because of the affordability issue.

Vice Chair Schwartz inquired as to where this is headed and what is happening with the information. Chair Thompson stated that there is a meeting on the 28th, and he will delegate to someone to talk about what the Human Rights Commission's thoughts are about it and how there are areas that need to be improved.

Director Valenti stated that VOICE provided the written testimony that they intend to submit for the February 28th meeting.

Upon a motion by Chair Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Bruner, Chair Thompson and Commissioner Fratila will draft a written testimony to be sent on February 28th that not only supports the written testimony by VOICE and the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, but also addresses the points discussed during this meeting.

7. Liaison Reports

Commissioner Palmer Johnson reported that the Commission for Women is in the process of rewriting its bylaws. She also reported that they attended Congressman Don Women's Conference.

Commissioner Reeder reported that the Commission on Aging heard from the SNAP implementation. He also announced the Excellence on Aging Awards nominations and said that the awards are going to be presented on May 12th.

Commissioner Prince announced that the John Duty Collins nomination and the Gerry Bertier Awards applications are now open. She reported that the Commission on Persons with Disabilities is dealing with transportation; they are trying to get more transparency about the assistive devices that they are putting on all of the buses for wheelchair users.

Vice Chair, Breslaw, talked about legislation and mentioned the concerns about the law enforcement cooperation with ICE; a bill passed the House and passed the Senate. She explained that there are two bills, one in the House and one in the Senate; these bills prohibit Virginia law enforcement from cooperating with ICE, unless ICE has a specific judicial warrant for someone. She also talked about a bill has passed both the House and the Senate that will prohibit Federal and State law enforcement from masking. There is another bill that will protect what the advocates call sensitive places, such as courthouses, polling places, hospitals, and schools, from ICE activities, unless they have a judicial warrant for a specific person.

8. Staff Report - No report.

9. Announcements/Adjournment

Director Valenti asked Commissioners to identify two dates to table with ALIVE. There is a sign-up sheet, and there are three dates that have the most people signed up.

March 7 – 9:00-11:00 am

March 14 – 9:00-11:00 am

April 11 – 10:00-2:00 p.m.

The Commission agreed on tabling on March 7 and April 11

The Commission meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.