

**ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026**

7:00 P.M., Lee Center
1108 Jefferson Street, Gold Room 1

Members Present

Rachel Dixon
Howard Weiss
Megan Prince
Shannon Loelius
Donna Spencer
Sarah Radt
Alex Sprague
Brendan Conn
Merle Cuthrell
Chasen Thoennes
Michael Kamin
Caitlin Scuderi

City Employees Present

Delante Wade
Chief Tarrick McGuire
Assistant Chief Jason North
Sasha Rutizer

Members Excused

Robbi Woodson

Members Absent

Miriam Mullen

Call to Order by Chair Prince

Chair Prince called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Upon a motion by Chair Prince, seconded by Howard Weiss, the Agenda was approved. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Approval of Minutes of the April Meeting

Upon a motion by Chair Prince, seconded by Commissioner Loelius, the April meeting minutes were approved, as amended. All Commissioners present voted aye.

Introduction of New Commissioner

Merle Cuthrell was introduced as a new Commissioner. Commissioner Cuthrell is serving a second term with the ACPD.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Chair's Report

Chair Prince stated that she will be resigning from the ACPD at the end of the calendar year.

The ACPD is looking for a third Executive Committee member. This position will be an appointed position. The Executive Committee meets thirty minutes prior to the monthly ACPD meeting.

Guest Speakers

Tarrick McGuire- Chief, Alexandria Police Department

Jason North- Assistant Chief, Alexandria Police Department

Sasha Rutizer- Police Chief of Staff, Alexandria Police Department

Chief McGuire introduced himself and provided the committee with his professional background. Chief McGuire worked for and retired from the Arlington, TX Police Department, where he served as the Assistant Police Chief. Chief McGuire also served as an advisor to the Arc of Virginia, Board of Directors. Chief McGuire provided the ACPD with some of his real-life experiences interacting with individuals with disabilities as a member of law enforcement. Chief McGuire stated that he is looking forward to working with the ACPD to help identify ways to improve the policies, practices and procedures for officers who interact with individuals with disabilities in Alexandria.

Assistant Chief North provided the ACPD with some of his real-life experiences interacting with individuals with disabilities as a member of law enforcement. Assistant Chief North spoke about trainings that is provided to officers such as autism awareness training, new officer training and virtual reality training that helps officers gain empathy when interacting with individuals with disabilities. The APD has also hosted sensory friendly events for kids with disabilities and provided community outreach to better understand the community and community needs.

Ms. Rutizer addressed mental health issues and how information is communicated to officers as they respond to the scene of a call. APD dispatch unit uses a report management system that contains information pertaining to previous calls for service that can be provided to officers and identify a potential mental health crisis in real time.

Q and A session was held between ACPD members, Chief McGuire, Assistant Chief North and Ms. Rutizer.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Chair Prince reminded members to review ACPD's legislative package of priorities from last year and submit any additions and/or comments. The city's legislative package can be found on the city website. The ACPD will vote on this year's package at the meeting in August.

The ACPD Awards ceremony is being held on June 30, 2026, at the American Physical Therapy Association, 3030 Potomac Ave. The ceremony starts at 5:00 p.m. Chair Prince would like to meet with the Commission at 4:15 p.m. There is no ACPD meeting in July.

Vice Chair Sprague held a discussion regarding the hantavirus. Vice Chair Sprague has suggested that going forward, ACPD meetings should be held virtually, for safety reasons, until it is proven that the hantavirus is under control and not a risk, especially to those who are immunocompromised. Vice Chair Sprague requested that Delante Wade reach out to the City Clerk and make them aware of potential upcoming virtual meetings due to the hantavirus.

Housing Committee & Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee:

Commissioner Dixon noted that Delante Wade sent out an email to the Commission regarding affordable and accessible housing units at the Residences at Tidelock. The city is accepting applications for the affordable units starting Saturday, May 23, 2026, through Monday, June 22, 2026, at 5 p.m.

The Sanse' located at 3600 Mount Vernon Avenue in the Arlandria Chirilagua neighborhood will begin accepting applications between April 20, 2026, and April 26, 2026, for its waitlist.

Accessibility-Friendly Businesses Committee: Commissioner Cuthrell and Vice Chair Sprague provided an update on the "Welcoming Travelers with Disabilities" seminar which was hosted by Visit Alexandria in collaboration with VisitAble. The event was held at the Virginia Tech campus in Potomac Yard on April 30, 2026. Joe Jamison, CEO and Founder for VisitAble was the keynote speaker. The seminar focused on (1) Learning the "why" behind Visit Alexandria's accessible travel initiative; (2) Gaining actionable takeaways to make your business more inclusive right away; and (3) Teaching individuals how to be part of Visit Alexandria's multi-faceted promotion.

Board of Architectural Review Committee: The BAR Design Guidelines Committee is starting to meet again soon. Commissioner Radt would like for the ACPD to review the Accessibility Chapter and provide updates to the BAR Design Guidelines Committee. Commissioner Radt has read the current language and provided the ACPD with potential edits and suggestions. Any suggestions and/or comments will be submitted to the BAR Design Guidelines Committee for further review and potential updates.

Action Item

Commissioner Dixon brought forth to the Commission a letter addressing “Accessibility Concerns Regarding the Braddock Road Corridor Improvements Project.” The letter addressed the following issues (1) Removal of on street parking eliminates essential access for disabled residents; (2) Relocation of ADA parking at churches creates new barriers to religious access; (3) Impacts on accessible transit use; (4) Emergency access and snow emergency route concerns; and (5) Direct engagement with disabled residents and disability serving organizations. The letter was voted on and approved with edits by the Commission. Commissioner Dixon will finalize the letter and then forward the letter to Delante Wade. Delante Wade will send the letter to the Mayor and City Council for review.

The Commission reviewed the submitted applications and nominations and, following deliberation, voted to determine the 2026 recipients of the Gerry Bertier Scholarship and the John Duty Collins III Award. Louis Tremante IV is the winner of the Gerry Bertier Scholarship and Danelle Johnson is the winner of the John Duty Collins Award. Mr. Tremante IV and Ms. Johnson will be honored at the ACPD Awards on June 30, 2026.

Member Reports

Vice Chair Sprague: City Council presented and endorsed the 2026 Autism Acceptance Month Proclamation on April 14, 2026. Vice Chair Sprague was in attendance.

Commissioner Radt: Disability Pride Month is in July. Commissioner Radt is looking for volunteers to help coordinator events.

Adjournment

Chair Prince motioned to adjourn, seconded by Vice Chair Sprague. All Commissioners present voted aye. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

The 2026 ACPD Awards Ceremony will be held on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The ceremony will be held at the American Physical Therapy Association, 3030 Potomac Avenue. ACPD members should arrive at the ceremony at 4:15 p.m.