

Economic Opportunities Commission
Sept. 19th meeting

Call to Order / Adjournment

7:07pm / 8:18pm

Attendees:

Anne Sclater
Geof Caldwell
Greg Parks
Hope Nelson
Kelly Stone
Lavon Sanders
Maani Stewart
Edmond Breitling (commission on employment nonvoting member)
Genevieve Fields (staff support)
Jessica Lurz (staff support)

Excused Absence:

Canek Aguirre
Gila Harris
LaDonna Sanders
Sal Biberaj

Budget Letter

- All commissions are be asked for input -- have until end of October to submit a letter
- We should try to work together with the different commissions to create a unified message
 - There's a quarterly Chair meeting that we can coordinate with (aging, housing affordability, community services board, social service advisory board, commission on women, EOC, ---- CSB, SSAB (drug court))
- Provide our top, second, and third priority issues; expected budget cuts will hit services this year so prioritization is important
 - Currently assessing services that are provided in each department to determine how important this services are, if they align with strategic plan, and if the fiscal impact (still internal at this point)
- We should look at City's Strategic Plan to guide us on priorities ("inclusive community" most closely aligns with our work --- homelessness, poverty, & affordability)
 - Could consider looking at last year's budget and the notes associated with it could be helpful
 - Our message should be on emphasize the needs of low-income residents
- Hope is volunteering to write the 1st draft of the letter (asking for guidance on language)
 - Utilizing the Needs Assessment is about as deep as we need to go on research

- Highlight the “global impact” that would occur if funds were to be cut from a program
- There may be additional light-lift data available already that we can also use
- Inclusive community where low income aren't left behind is the driving message

Needs Assessment

- Data analysis is underway. EOC members have been assigned portions of the full report to write
 - Volunteers are needed to help write - target date for completion is December
 - Maani help with writing housing
 - Geof with help with methodology
 - 233 completed surveys; avg. age 44; avg. household size 4; most that completed reported having full-time employment
 - Alexandria has a high rate of underemployment, but not so much unemployment
- It's acknowledged that there could be bias in the survey based on the fact of where surveys were distributed
- Housing, food, childcare were top 3 issues
 - Income & education were identified as correlations --- under \$20K per year was the majority of people
 - Housing
 - Evidence of correlation between housing conditions & zip codes
 - People that received housing vouchers showed to have higher rates of challenges paying utilities
 - Food:
 - Race showed correlation with food insecurities
 - It was identified that WIC recipients also had insecurity
 - By zip code --- higher insecurity rates where food banks are not located
 - Childcare
 - Significant amount of friends & family as primary caregiver; financial assistance and certified daycare providers were top needs of what respondents felt would help
 - Medical, employment, public benefits are other sections that were mentioned
 - Moving forward we will try to line up speakers for EOC based on issues
 - Hunger Free Alexandria has offered to come in Oct.

Minutes Review

- End of year report was submitted by Canek & Kelly (she'll send it out to the commission)
- Date of the meeting is wrong
- Anne moved to approve minutes; Hope second motion; no objections

Membership

- TC Williams student, jr, has submitted an application --- will fill category 2 (low-income representative) --- there are 3 current vacancies
 - Greg motion to approve Michael to the board; Lavon second; no objections

- Vacancy still stands for elected city official representative
- Follow-up with compania, together we bake, arha, alive to help fill Cat 2
- 2 vacancies in Cat III (general member)

Changes to upcoming meeting dates

- Move Nov. meeting to 2nd Wed (14th), then the 19th of Dec
 - Geof moved; Hope second; no objections

Connecting with other commissions

- Proposed that we start doing targeted outreach to other commissions for strategic issues
 - Housing affordability committee (Robin); commission for women (just got a new chair); Babs - Commission on Aging; Community Services Board -- behavioral & mental health issues (Brad); Social Services Advisory Board (Mark)
 - Human Rights Commission; Commission on Disability; child youth families collaborative; landlord tenant relation board
 - Anne - Community Services Board
 - Geof – Commission on aging
 - Kelly – Alexandria housing affordability advisory committee
 - Social Services Advisory Board will already connect with us (Lesa Gilbert staffs this commission)
 - LaVon - Youth & Children Collaborative
 - We will incorporate “report backs” for future meetings

Announcements

- Agenda Alexandria is held at Hermitage on 24th of Sept -- topic is affordable housing; fee is about \$15
- Greg motions to adjourn; Hope seconds