

## Chair's Report

*Alexandria Commission for the Arts  
Submitted by Matthew Stensrud  
Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015*

Welcome back from summer! While many of us took a break from life over parts of the summer – and some of us still are! – the City of Alexandria arts continue to move forward. There are many things to look forward to for the Commission's 2015-2016 year. First, here are some highlights from the past few months:

- The Executive Committee met on Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Executive Committee met with James Spengler, Director of the City of Alexandria's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA) Department and Diane Ruggiero on Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>. Some things to come out of that meeting include:
  - Monthly meetings between the Executive Committee and the Director to help the Commission know what's coming forward in the City
  - Connecting the City's public art projects with other City projects more clearly
  - Linking the Commission with other RPCA Commissions to discuss similar goals
  - Finding common ground with the Alexandria Arts Forum and the City's arts organizations to create a consistent message for the 2015-2016 year
- Amber Gordon, Secretary, attended a meeting with a delegation from Beijing, China, and presented information on the Commission and arts in Alexandria, on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup>.

There are also many items to look forward to, including the following steps I believe necessary to streamline many of the inner workings of the Commission:

- The agenda and all additional items from committees and staff will be sent via email and available on the Commission's website no later than three business days before the meeting, normally the Friday before.
- Creation of an annual calendar for Commissioners and staff in order to know when yearly items are to be addressed
- Implementation of an application system for all possible appointees to task forces, committees and work groups of the Commission
- Updating the Commission website to include agenda, minutes, Chair reports, committee reports, memos, and letters from the Commission in clearly defined sections
- Receiving any additional support from staff to ensure the Commission is at its full potential, to include but not limited to City letterhead for Commission letters to other City bodies, reports on City arts events, financial updates on arts-related City business, etc.

The Executive Committee will meet with staff to begin working toward these goals and will keep the Commission informed of the progress.

As Chair, my responsibility is also to ensure each individual Commissioner is meeting their full potential. Over the next few months, I would like to meet with each Commissioner to discuss this and the future of arts in Alexandria. More information on scheduling a time is forthcoming.

Finally, Commissioners are asked to help find meeting spaces for Commission meetings beginning in January. Begin thinking of appropriate spaces and be prepared to take on a month. Commissioners will work with staff to ensure the meeting venue meets any and all necessary requirements and is appropriately scheduled.

To: Members of the Planning Commission  
CC: Waterfront Commission and City Council  
From: The Alexandria Commission for the Arts  
Re: The Public Art Contribution from 500 & 501 N. Union St. Robinson  
Terminal North (RTN), Planning Commission Meeting October 8, 2015, 7  
PM, City Council Chambers, City Hall, 301 King Street

Dear Planning Commissioner,

The Alexandria Commission on the Arts wishes to acknowledge and applaud the decision of the developers for Robinson Terminal North to provide a contribution of \$78,000 to be used for Public Art.

Our public art policy outlines three creative directions for public art in Alexandria: Time and Place, Neighborhoods and Gathering Places and the Urban Natural Environment. We are fortunate that the Small Area Plan for the Waterfront includes a rich and varied plan outlining how public art can enhance the cultural and historic experience of this environment. The Commission for the Arts was deeply involved in developing this part of the Waterfront Plan, which was approved by City Council in December 2014.

This developer contribution will help to celebrate and enhance the experience of the Waterfront for both local residents and visitors to our city. It is also an example of the important role that private business can play in helping to enrich the cultural life of our city. A vibrant ambiance also contributes to the economic value of the both the development and to local businesses.

We also wish to thank the City staff who have worked diligently to move this project forward. The Commission for the Arts will continue to work closely with the Office of the Arts and other City staff to improve, enrich and enhance the experience of the Waterfront for everyone.

Sincerely,

Matthew Stenstrud  
Chair, Alexandria Commission for the Arts.