



Picture taken at Council Chamber on Occasion of Council Adoption of the Environmental Action Plan 2040, July 9, 2019

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## **FY 2019 EPC Annual Report**

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

SEPTEMBER 21, 2019

## 1. Introduction

The Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) was established under Chapter 4, Article M, of the City Code to “advise and make recommendations to the City Council and, when appropriate, to the Planning Commission and City Manager.” This report provides a summary of EPC activities during Fiscal Year 2019 (FY2019).

## 2. Who We Are

The Alexandria City Council established the EPC in 1970 to advise and make recommendations to the City Council and, where appropriate, to the Planning Commission and City Manager, on matters relating to the following:

- Clean air;
- Land use;
- Noise pollution and abatement;
- Pesticides, herbicides and contaminants;
- Solid waste;
- Water quality and supply;
- Other matters referred to the EPC by the City and citizens; and
- Other topics relating to the conservation and protection of Alexandria’s environment.

The EPC, when fully appointed consists of 13 members, including five members from the field of environmental sciences, five citizen-at-large members, one member from the field of urban planning, one member with experience in Federal or state environmental statues/regulations, and one representative from the Alexandria business community. The EPC regularly works with other organizations to further the environmental goals of the City.

The following is a list of the Commissioners who served on the EPC during FY2019.

James Kapsis (Chair)	Eldon Boes	Jessica Lassetter <sup>1</sup>
Praveen Kathpal (Vice Chair)	James Hook <sup>2</sup>	
Elizabeth Bradley (Secretary) <sup>1</sup>	Michael Kulas <sup>2</sup>	
Humza Arshad <sup>2</sup>	Brendan Owens	
Stephen Milone <sup>1</sup>	Carolyn Schroeder	
Scott Barstow <sup>1</sup>	Reid Sherman	
Craig Berry <sup>2</sup>	Sean Wilson <sup>1</sup>	
Geoffrey Goode	Leslie Jones	

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Term ended in 2019; <sup>2</sup>Term began in 2019

The EPC met twice a month during this busy year; one working meeting and one business

meeting. The Chair may call other meetings as deemed necessary. All meetings are open to the public and notification of meetings is provided at least three business days prior to, as required by Virginia and City public disclosure law. Minutes of the meetings are posted to the EPC page on the City website:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/EnvironmentalPolicyCommission.html>

Throughout the year, the EPC has been well supported by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Office of Environmental Quality. The EPC wishes to express its thanks for the time, expertise and devotion to duty shown by T&ES leadership and staff.

### **3. FY19 EPC Annual Retreat & Priorities**

On September 8, 2018, the EPC held its annual retreat to discuss EPC priorities and strategies for the coming year. For FY2019, the main priority for the commission was to work with City Departments to update the Environmental Action Plan 2030, focusing on the following five focus areas for the Phase I of the update process:

- Climate Change
- Energy
- Green building
- Land use and open space
- Solid waste

EPC members identified and prioritized strategies for incorporating goals, targets and actions into the EAP update. EPC members reviewed presentations prepared by fellow commissioners, proposed strategies and schedules for engaging City staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders to advance progress in each topic area.

### **4. FY19 EPC Activities**

EPC members worked diligently this past year on revising the EAP 2030, culminating in the Council adoption of EAP 2040 in July 2019. Five focus areas listed above were adopted in a Phase I of the updated EAP 2030 in October 2018. The new name for the updated EAP 2030 is EAP 2040 and includes Phase I topics and five additional areas: Transportation, Water Resources, Health, Air Quality, and Implementation and Outreach.

At the Council adoption of the EAP 2040, Scott Barstow, a former EPC member, was recognized by City Council for his leadership in the EPC over 10 years including his role as past EPC Chair.

Public engagement was part of the development of the EAP 2040, EPC and the City held several open houses, presentations to interested groups, an Eco-City Café in March 2018 and an Eco-City Summit in March 2019 with many EPC members active participation. Each of these events gathered community input and support for priorities in the EAP 2040.

EPC and staff from several City departments held regular small group meetings and conference calls to review progress, discuss technical details, and work on targets and priorities for actions in the EAP 2040.

During FY19, EPC hosted nine (9) meetings and seven (7) work sessions. The EPC also hosted and participated in joint meetings with other City Boards and Commissions including the Planning; and Parks and Recreation Commissions and the Housing Affordability Advisory Committee.

### Letters to Council

The EPC provided letters to City Council addressing the following topics:

- Support for EAP 2040, June 11, 2019
- Budget FY 2020, March 18, 2019
- Budget FY2020, December 12, 2018
- Support for WasteSmart, November 6, 2018
- Virginia Energy Plan, August 18, 2018

### Commissions and Advisory Groups

Members of the EPC represented the EPC on the following City commissions and working groups:

- Eco-City Steering Committee
- Potomac Yard Metro Station Implementation Group
- Waterfront Commission
- Transportation Commission
- Alexandria Earth Day Planning Committee
- Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Advisory Group
- River Renew Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Green Building Policy Update Task Force

### Alexandria Earth Day

The Alexandria Earth Day event took place for the third consecutive year at the Lenny Harris Memorial Fields at Braddock Park on April 27, 2019. The theme this year was "Climate Change –Take Action" emphasizing the roles of citizen actions towards mitigating climate impacts. EPC commissioner Eldon Boes chaired the organizing committee. Attendance was estimated at over 600 visitors but down from previous years. Polling showed the majority were Alexandria residents.

The "Tent Talks" feature included speakers addressing green building, green investing, climate change and the City's Environmental Action Plan. This year's event expanded the exhibit area addressing alternative modes of transportation. A display of electric vehicles (EV) was parked on the adjacent George Washington Middle School parking lot. The EVs included a WMATA metro bus, electric scooters and automobiles. A DASH bus equipped with a bike carrier was available for bicyclers to practice loading. The Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee sponsored a bike rodeo on the parking lot for children

of all ages wishing to improve their biking skills.

#### Ellen Pickering Environmental Excellence Award

Kurt Moser, President of the Four Mile Run Conservancy Foundation in Alexandria was recognized for his stewardship of Alexandria's environment and natural resources and presented with the 2019 Ellen Pickering Environmental Excellence Award. EPC was part of the nominating committee.

### **5. FY19 EPC Highlights**

- EPC was instrumental in the successful City Council adoption of the Environmental Action Plan 2040 on July 9, 2019. This is a road map for City leaders and Alexandria communities to take actions toward environmental sustainability and to fight the urgent global issue of climate change.
- EPC played a significant role in the process and adoption of the new Green Building Policy on June 22, 2019.

### **6. EPC Membership Recruitment**

Five members resigned and were replaced by four new members. The current roster consists of 11 members, with two open positions.

### **7. Leadership**

The commission elects four leadership positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Earth Day Chair) on an annual basis. Elections for FY20 were held at the June 2019 meeting. Praveen Kathpal was elected as Chair, James Kapsis was re-elected as Vice Chair, and Michael Kulas was elected as Secretary. There are no candidates for Earth Day Chair as of September 2019.