

**Alexandria Commission for Women**

**Virtual Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 11, 2022**

**7:00 pm**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Anuja Miner; Diana Karczmarczyk; Ann Harbour, Shelley Brown; Yvette Jiang; Crystal Kramer; Elizabeth “PJ” Palmer Johnson; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Sarah Holley; Emily Eckert; Jennifer Wetmore, Jennifer Stowe; Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin, Rochelle Hall and Sarah Porter

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** None.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Debra Evans, Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Domestic Violence Program/Sexual Assault Center (DVP/SAC); LaTanya Chinagorom, DCHS, DVP/SAC; Josh Baker (General Manager/Chief Executive Officer) and Martin Barna (Director of Planning and Marketing), DASH Bus Alexandria Transit Company

**1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Alexandria Commission for Women (ACFW) was called to order by Chair Harbour at 7:05 p.m. The notice for the City of Alexandria virtual requirements were read. The floor was opened for public comment. No public comments were made. Commissioner Witkin noted that the ordinance on meeting in quorum states, “A quorum of eight members is required before the Commission can take official action.”

**2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2021 MINUTES**

Review of the draft minutes for December 2021 took place. Some edits were suggested. Chair Harbour asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended; Commissioner Holley motioned to approve, and Commissioner Palmer Johnson seconded. All were in favor of the approval.

**3. DASH BUS PRESENTATION BY JOSH BAKER AND MARTIN BARNA**

The new DASH Network launched in September 2021, the first phase of their 2022-2030 vision. This vision includes new structures, bus routes, and frequency in service. DASH BUS is now 100% fare free. There have been positive impacts and an increase in ridership. Almost 100% of DASH Bus staff are vaccinated. DASH is currently operating on a reduced schedule due to shortfalls in staffing.

DASH is currently reassessing their current unfolded stroller policy. They will announce the new relaxed unfolded stroller policy within the next two months. DASH Bus will continue to follow the Federal mask

mandate. **Action Item: Commissioners who are interested in weighing in on the DASH equity and FY23 transit development plan and service improvements in March and April are asked to go to [dashbus.com](https://dashbus.com).**

DASH is making efforts toward equity and have made efforts to recruit female employees. They have a female assistant director in mechanics. They have a diverse workforce and encourage people from all backgrounds to apply. **Action Item: The Commission will explore ways to partner with DASH and provide information.**

City staff is working on the Duke Street *In Motion Project*. This project looks at how the transit system lanes will be designed. **Action Item: Martin Barna will provide data feedback from an *In Motion Project* survey.**

#### **4. ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL**

At the December meeting it was mentioned that Chair Harbour would draft a letter to send to Council about having greater flexibility for Boards and Commissions to meet electronically. The City's policy is in coordination with what the State of Virginia allows in electronic participation. The Commission has had discussion to have an advocacy plan on electronic participation due to concerns about equity and flexibility and must vote on the policy. A copy of the Electronic Policy has been emailed to Commissioners. **Action Item: New Commissioners were asked to let the Executive Committee know if they need a copy of the electronic participation policy document. Chair Harbour will ask Mayor Wilson if City Council has the ability to declare a local state of emergency due to upticks in COVID infections.**

First Vice Chair Karczmarczyk made a motion to approve the electronic policy to be in compliance with the with the requests of the boards and commissions Second Vice Chair Brown seconded. None opposed. Commissioner Palmer Johnson abstained.

Chair Harbour proposed that the Commission include electronic participation as a third prong into the legislative policy of the Commission advocacy strategy. General consensus was taken by the Commission that they will amend their legislative priorities for 2022 and will coordinate with the Commission on Human Rights through Commission for Women liaison Commissioner Palmer Johnson.

#### **5. SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR FIRST VICE CHAIR**

Commissioner Miner, as the Nominations Committee Chair, sent an email in December and January requesting nominations for the First Vice Chair position that will open in February 2022. The Executive Committee member, First Vice Chair Karczmarczyk is stepping down February 12th. The deadline for email nominations was last Friday, January 7th. One self-nomination was received (Commissioner Kramer). The floor was open for self-nominations or to nominate someone else for the First Vice Chair position. There

were no nominations. Commissioner Kramer will be First Vice Chair. All were in favor. Thanks were extended to First Vice Chair Karczmarczyk and congratulations were extended to Commissioner Kramer **Action Item: Debra Evans will send the Robert's Rules briefing to Commissioners via email.**

## **6. PRIORITIES REVIEW AND NEXT STEPS**

The Commission has made a concerted effort to shift focus from events-based activities and focused on creating and advancing policies that affect women in the City of Alexandria. Former Commissioner Julie Harbour stepped down from the Commission, thus leaving a vacancy for the Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault (DV/SA) Subcommittee Chair. The Commission is looking for someone who would fill this role. It was asked if the DV/SA Subcommittee could have a co-chair. Commissioner Stowe expressed interest and will now co-chair the subcommittee with Commissioner Hutchinson. All were in favor.

**Action Item: All new Commissioners were asked to send the Executive Committee an email to state what their interests are (Housing or DV/SA Subcommittees) within one week.**

- Advocacy Day: February 2, 2022: Advocacy Day for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault will take place from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Domestic Violence Public Policy Committee looks at bills that are introduced to see if they will affect clients. Talking points are prepared. Sarah Taylor holds legislative meetings every Friday at 7:30 p.m. and attends some advocacy days. Registration is through Action Alliance. **Action Item: Debra Evans will send out more information from the Action Alliance as she gets it.**
  - The Commission for Women will develop policy one-pagers that can summarize key issues that City Council could address. These can be shared with other Boards and Commissions about policy changes to create an advocacy network. **Action Item: Commissioners were reminded to ensure they post a public notice three days prior if meeting with three or more Commissioners by emailing Debra Evans. Action Item: Commissioner Wetmore expressed interest in assisting in the one-pager effort. All were encouraged to provide their insights.**

*Affordable Housing Subcommittee Members:* Commissioner Kramer, Second Vice Chair Brown, Commissioner Palmer Johnson, and Commissioner Jiang

*Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Subcommittee Members:* Chair Harbour, Commissioner Miner, First Vice Chair Karczmarczyk, Second Vice Chair Brown **Action Item: Will put the roster out of who belongs to which subcommittee once new members have provided their interests.**

## 7. NEW/ONGOING BUSINESS

- Commission Liaison Reports (Human Rights, Aging, HIV/AIDS): Liaisons can send a written report via email to the Commission and have their written report included in the minutes (include the date of report out).
  - HIV/AIDS: The Commission on HIV/AIDS did not meet in December 2021, but will meet this month, January 2022.
  - Human Rights Commission: The last Human Rights Commission was December 21, 2021, via Zoom. They looked at a legislative update provided by Sarah Taylor. The new minimum wage for VA last year was \$15 increased over time. It now is \$11 in the Virginia area. The Rainbow Crosswalk was reviewed and has not been able to move forward. Commissioner Palmer Johnson provided a report on the contributory negligence bill, which looks like it will not be re-introduced. The Human Rights Commission will continue to research it. Commissioner Palmer Johnson sits on the Contributory Negligence Bill Subcommittee and will report out. Looked at the 3G phase out as it impacts those with lower income and women.
  - Commission on Aging: Chair Harbour can share Can report out from the minutes.

- Commissioner Engagement:

Commissioners were asked to be attentive to their attendance in meetings and asked to let the Commission know when they will be absent. Absences will be listed in meeting minutes by each person's name.

Commissioners were asked if someone would like to serve as Commission Engagement to ensure Commissioners are being held accountable and to check on them.

It was suggested that a quick recap of the Commission meetings be shared immediately after the meetings. It was also suggested that Commissioners who miss meetings look at the meeting recordings. **Action Item: City staff can have the video of Commission meetings posted on the website within the week.**

- DVP/SAC Client Needs: the DVP/SAC Client needs list link will be listed on the bottom of all the Commission meeting agendas going forward.
- Zebra Articles: The deadline for the next article is February 15th; the article will be published in March on Women's History in Alexandria. The only articles must be about Alexandria. Former Chair Julie Harbour had provided a framework for article submissions. Articles that are due: February – Black History Month; March - Women's History; April - Sexual Assault; May - Mental Health. Other

rules: Articles must be 500 words or less. A photograph must be submitted with the copyright or name of the photographer. Articles must be sent to Commissioner Palmer Johnson in a Word document (for editing for grammar). Afterward, the article will be submitted to Chris at Zebra Press who gives final approval. **Action Item: Commissioner Miner will assist Commissioner Palmer Johnson in editing and writing articles. Action Item: Commissioners should submit articles to the Executive Committee and Commissioners Palmer Johnson and Miner. Action Item: All were asked to provide resources on Women's History as a foundation for March's article.**

- General Updates: SharePoint - **Action Item: Commissioners should have received a link to join the Commission for Women SharePoint site (check Spam folder as well). The email is from Paul Kim. If anyone did not receive the link, request it through Debra Evans.**

## 8. NEXT STEPS

Last year, the Commission wanted to do something to honor Councilwoman Del Pepper, upon her retirement. She is the longest serving person, male or female, to serve on City Council (36 years) and was a champion for the Commission for Women. It was suggested to do an article on Women's History to incorporate the fact that she served 36 years on City Council and include the other two women who served on the City Council in Alexandria, also noting that the first person to own Alexandria was a woman. **Action Item: The Executive Committee will put the topic on the agenda for the February 2022 meeting to discuss how to honor Del Pepper. Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson was asked to facilitate the discussion for February.**

### Adjournment

Chair Harbour requested a motion for adjournment. Commission Palmer Johnson motioned, and First Vice Chair Karczmarczyk seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

### Important Dates / Reminders / Announcements

- ✓ **February - National Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month (TDVAM) (February)**
- ✓ **March - Salute to Women**
- ✓ **April 23rd - TODSTWD**
  - **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) Events**
- ✓ **May - Women's History Walk**
- ✓ **October - Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM)**

- **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**