City of Alexandria, Virginia
Alexandria Beautification Commission (ABC)
P.O. Box 178
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 8, 2022
7:30 PM

Present: Michael Budinski, Steve Cohen (Chair), Kathryn Chiasson (Vice Chair), Julie Chapman (Secretary), Richard Dorrier, Alexander Mcelya, Laura Norfolk, Eleanor Quigley, Denise Tennant

Excused Absences: Chirag Mapara

Unexcused Absences: Casey Clark, Monica Murphy

City Staff: Oscar Mendoza

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

1. **Approval of the June 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes**
   a. Alex motioned to approve the minutes, Michael seconded, unanimous approval.
2. **Membership Updates**
   a. 12 members, to date.
   b. We are looking for new Commission members.
3. **Commission Business**
   a. Three New Priority Goals Approved at the ABC August 2022 Retreat
      i. Inspire beautification through the Awards Program.
      ii. Promote environmental sustainability through collaboration and engagement with City Council, City staff, and private organizations.
      iii. Educate local community on beautification and sustainability best practices.
   b. Objectives to support the ABC 3 goals discussed during planning meeting and identified during September meeting
      i. Goal: Inspire beautification through the Awards Program
         a. Objectives
            i. Conduct 3 categories of awards per year.
            ii. Publicize winners broadly (with ABC name attached).
            iii. Determine best way to conduct awards (annually, quarterly, ceremony, etc.)
               a. Re-evaluate award categories and approach on an annual basis to increase participation and support ABC goals.

        iv. Provide feedback to nominees for awards who are cultivating ecologically undesirable trees and plants

        v. Promote Award messaging through the 'Educate' goal.

ii. Goal: Promote environmental sustainability through collaboration and engagement with City Council, City staff, and private organizations

    a. Objectives

        i. Partner with Alexandria Tree Stewards to enhance the City's tree canopy.

        ii. Partner with Allison Ferguson Foundation (or similar organization) and the Waterfront Commission to promote waterfront clean-up.

        iii. Partner with

            a. City RPCA to help implement the City's Adopt-A-Block, Adopt-A-Park, and Adopt-A Garden programs. Increase participation within Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Garden , etc.

            b. The Office of Sustainability to extend and complement their strategic effort to achieve sustainability.

            c. Resident/citizen groups to beautify underutilized land in their neighborhoods inn ab environmentally sustainable manner.

            d. The Office of Art to promote sustainability.

            e. NGOs to enhance the City tree canopy.

            f. City Task Force on Climate Change

            g. The Environmental Policy Commission

            h. Old Town North Small Area Plan

            i. Partner with City T&ES to enhance the City's gateways.

            j. (Note: 'Partner' is not a formal relationship but means 'collaborate' with one or more members spearheading efforts to do things jointly including participating in programs or events, advertising opportunities, developing supporting material or documents, etc.)

        iv. Proactively maintain tree wells; as an example DC uses rubberized mats to cover tree wells yet still allow rainwater to enter the wells.

        v. Engage City Council on beautification/sustainability issues.

        vi. Track major developments in Alexandria and advocate for beautification elements.

   iii. Goal: Educate local community on beautification and sustainability best practices

     a. Objectives

       i. "Build" a library of content to be amplified; Potential content categories: ABC Original Content (would be architectural awards, etc), Repost of Alexandria "Influencer" content (these would be people who post sunrises, beautiful buildings, etc, that we could repost), and External Content (links to informative webinars, advertise native plant sales etc).

       ii. Use social media to publicize content on a regular basis.

       iii. Collaborate with local newspapers and publications to highlight all ABC events & programs.

       iv. Participate in the City's Earth Day event and local nonprofit sponsored events on an annual basis.

       v. Establish a consistent communication cadence by building a communication calendar.

       vi. Build out the ABC web page

         a. Promote traffic

         b. Measure traffic

         c. Utilize QR code or plan application to drive traffic and educate

         d. Create literature highlighting sustainability, invasive plants, native plants and distribute at farmer markets across Alexandria

         e. Create a 'did you know' campaign.

       vii. Promote Award goals, messaging and themes.

  c. New Proposed Subcommittees by Goals

    i. Goal One: Kathryn Chiasson, Steve Cohen, Alex Mcelya, Laura Norfolk

    ii. Goal Two: Richard Dorrier, Monica Murphy, Eleanor Quigley, Denise Tennant

    iii. Goal Three: Michael Budinski, Julie Chapman

      (Casey and Chirag need to be placed on a sub-committee)

  d. Subcommittee Next Steps

    i. Choose 3-5 objectives to address

    ii. Note Objectives should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based

    iii. Send an email to organize an in-person meeting; reminder: according to ABC rules, discussions can only happen at the meeting; not online.

    iv. Next ABC meeting in October review proposed objectives for Commission approval.

4. Next Awards Cycle focus is Community

     a. The nominee focus is public properties or individual or group activities/efforts that promote beautification in the community. Examples include cleanups, invasive plant removal, public parks or other public properties that contribute to the beautification of the City through landscaping, architecture, and/or environmentally sustainable practices.

     b. Steven to send out examples and provide a list of previous winners.

     c. Nominations to be identified and evaluated in Sept/Oct timeframe.

     d. Awards process completed November 14.

5. **New Commission Business**
     a. None

6. **Agenda Items for the October Meeting**
     a. New goals and objectives: N/A
     b. Subcommittee progress: N/A

7. **Public Comment/Discussion: None**

8. **The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:50 PM.**