

Alexandria Commission for Women

Virtual Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elisabeth Palmer Johnson (3 excused absences); Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin (1 excused absence); Yvette Jiang; Crystal Kramer; Jennifer Stowe (2 excused absences); Anuja Miner (1 excused absence) and Jennifer Wetmore (3 excused absences); Sarah Holley (3 excused absences); Sarah Porter (1 excused absence) and T. Nicole Hutchinson (1 excused absence/1 unexcused)

MEMBERS PRESENT (Virtually): Lexi White (1 excused absence); Matthew Worner; Lee Taylor-Penn (2 excused absences); Shelley Brown (1 excused absence) and Emily Eckert

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Charlotte Scherer (1 unexcused absence/2 excused absence)

OTHER ATTENDEES: Debra Evans, Domestic Violence Program/Sexual Assault Center (DVP/SAC), Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and LaTanya Chinagorom (DVP/SAC, DCHS); Barbara Paulson (Director Center for Children and Families, DCHS); Josh Baker (Director, DASH Bus) and Tristan Cunningham (Service Transit Manager, DASH Bus)

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER/PUBLIC COMMENT

The in-person meeting of the Alexandria Commission for Women (ACFW) was called to order by Chair Kramer at 7:04 p.m. A quorum had not been met at the beginning of the meeting. This meeting was held in person and via Zoom and was made open to the public and open for public comment after a quorum was met. It was noted that on April 15, 2023, repro rights – zoning request is on April 15 council meeting. Want some commissioners to give a comment for them not to delete that budget request. Saturday, 9:30am also can attend virtually. them not to delete that budget request.

2. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2023 MINUTES

The March 2023 minutes were shared with the Commissioners for review during the meeting. Corrections were noted. A motion was made by Commissioner Witkin to approve the minutes as amended; seconded by Commissioner Stowe. Commissioner Wetmore abstained. All were in favor. None opposed.

3. PRESENTATION BY DASH REPRESENTATIVES CEO JOSH BAKER AND SERVICE TRANSIT MANAGER, TRISTAN CUNNINGHAM

- DASH Bus consists of 10 board of directors, over 290 staff, and are open 24 hours/day.
- They run 100 buses and is the only major transit system that exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Thanks were extended to the Commission on pushing for accessibility. They are one of the first transit systems allowing strollers aboard their buses.
- DASH Bus makes an estimated 2,200 trips per day by students on DASH. Fare-free programs have allowed for accessibility. They are currently looking at investments in new buses, supporting collective bargaining, have a 2030 project, fare-free ridership is still taking place, and they are looking at equity in transit (low fares).
- DASH Bus is looking to create meaningful partnerships and learn how they can make sure their service is beneficial to their community by identifying barriers. They need to hear from the public what the priorities are and would like to hear any responses from the Commission regarding the briefing/information provided and how to advocate. The information will be shared with the board of directors. See the presentation slides for more information email dashbus@alexandriava.gov or go to www.dashbus.com/tdp.

4. ATTENDANCE FOR BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The subject of attendance has arisen due to the Commission not meeting quorum three times. Beginning May 2023 these guidelines will be in place. It was noted that the City Council may remove any Commissioner who has more than two unexcused absences. The meeting day for the Commission is the 2nd Tuesdays of every month and is written in the bylaws. Discussions included moving the Commission meetings to another day of the week. The information shared by the City Attorney regarding attendance and Commission guidelines are as follows:

- Excused absences are limited to two times per calendar year; it is a state-wide mandate.
- Commissioners are asked to notify Chair Kramer and staff liaison, Debra Evans (if any family issues, work travel, and emergencies arise).
- Members must attend 75% of the meetings and the Chair may excuse the absence.
- Everyone should be fully engaged in meetings.
- No electronics are allowed, unless taking notes.
- Options were suggested for shifting the meetings away from election day.

Action Item: Chair Kramer will check with the City Attorney to see if Commissioners who are engaged in other Commission work are at risk. A formal maternity policy will be drafted. Action Item: It was proposed that Commissioners state ahead of time whether they will be at the meetings or not.

5. EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS COMMITTEE DISCUSSION (ELECTION IS NEXT MEETING, MAY 9)

Elections will be held at the next Commission meeting, Tuesday, May 9, 2023. Commissioner Palmer Johnson received nominations for the slate of officers as follows:

- Chair Crystal Kramer – 2 nominations
- First Vice Chair Anuja Miner – 4 nominations
- Second Vice Chair Shelley Brown – 2 nominations

Commissioner Palmer Johnson called for additional nominations from the floor. None were received. She will ask again on Tuesday, May 9, 2023. **Action Item: Commissioners were asked to check with the person before nominating them by Monday, May 8th.**

6. MEMBERSHIP TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMISSIONS FOR WOMEN

The Commission will join the National Association of Commissions for Women. Membership cost is \$75. DCHS may have the funds. **Action Item: Debra Evans will inquire about funding.**

7. REQUEST FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PHOTOS & COMMENTS

First Vice Chair Miner called for social media pics for posting and for Commissioner bios. **Action Item: First Vice Chair Miner and Commissioner Stowe will share the photos with the Commission's Executive Board to post on social media.**

8. REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS

- 50th Anniversary Subcommittee: On March 28, 2023, the subcommittee met (Commissioners Hutchinson, Wetmore, Stowe, Eckert, Witkin, and Chair Crystal). Commissioner Wetmore met with Vice Mayor Jackson, and a budget was submitted for \$13K by March 31, 2023, with an additional \$7K. The Commission will know what their budget will be by May 3rd. The subcommittee also discussed costs for awards (plaques), ticket prices, sponsorship ideas, cocktail attire and what awards will be given. The Futures Award will be given to former Councilwoman Redella "Del" Pepper. There will be four additional awards given to other winners. The first subcommittee meeting will be held May 8 at 7pm, (4th Tuesday of each month) at 1225 First St. They will determine award categories,

discuss the application and nomination process, and the process of determining winners. The budget will be discussed based on the City Council's decision. Subcommittees will be chosen for Commissioners who are not present. Everyone must be a part of a subcommittee. The Commission will bring in three people from outside to review the nominations. The subcommittees are as follows:

- 1) **Awards** – Commissioners Hutchinson, Jiang, Wetmore, and Second Vice Chair Brown
 - 2) **Publicity Engagement** – Commissioners Stowe, Witkin, Worner, and Second Vice Chair Brown
 - 3) **Venue** – First Vice Chair Miner and Commissioners Palmer Johnson, and White
 - 4) **Venue/Food/Beverage** – Commissioners Holley, Palmer Johnson, Taylor-Penn, Porter, Second Vice Chair Brown, and First Vice Chair Miner
 - 5) **Fundraising** – Commissioners Palmer Johnson, Stowe, First Vice Chair Miner, and Chair Kramer
 - 6) **Social Media** – None.
- *Affordable Housing & Transportation* –The Affordable Housing Regional Fair Housing Draft Plan that was open for public comment. A letter was provided to City Council last week.
 - *Reproductive Rights* – Commissioners Eckert and White provided testimony at the Zoning and Planning Commission meeting; this commission passed zoning amendments for abortion providers to open for service. The amendments will move forward to the City Council. The hearing meeting will be held on April 15, 2023. **Action Item: Commissioners were invited to attend the hearing.**
The June 8th webinar will take place - Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan will be speaking. Another speaker will be from the DC Abortion Fund. Commissioner Eckert sent a statement to the City Council Liaisons for the Commission for Women. **Action Item: City Council Liaisons should send this statement to the Councilmembers. Action Item: Debra Evans will email Gloria Sitton to inquire.**
 - *DASH Representative Report Out* – Dash Bus will have pop up events 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the Van Dorn Metro. The Transit Development Plan comment window closes April 14, 2023. DASH forwarded a letter to City Council reference FY2024 unfunded items.
 - *Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking*: The subcommittee had not met. They will follow up on the Human Trafficking Program that took place in January 2023.
 - *Commissioner/City Council Engagement*: Will meet with Councilman Kirk McPike and Vice Mayor Jackson. Commissioners will report at the next meeting.
 - *Human Rights (HR) Commission*: The committee met on March 21, 2023, with the guest speaker Sheriff Sean Casey. Topics included current policies and measures to investigate the deaths at the

detention center, procedures taken to prevent future deaths and measures utilized to ensure migrant children are not exploited.

The Sheriff's staff consists of sworn and civilian staff. According to civilian staff 82% are female; sworn female staff are 22% Black; 6% White; 3% Hispanic; and less than 1% Asian and other. Several of the females are captains and lieutenants. The Sheriff's Department is a constitutional officer – every entity in Virginia has a sheriff and is elected and appoints their staff, but not every entity has a Police Department. The Sheriff's Department is an entity of itself.

In conjunction with the Landlord and Tenants Relations Board the Human Rights Commission met on April 5th for a listening session to hear from the tenants about what they are experiencing at Southern Towers. The members of the executive committee met Monday, April 10th. They will be meeting on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. - 12 Noon with *Alive!* at the *Alive!* Food Hub on South Van Dorn Street. They will ask people if they have any issues with human rights. The Human Rights Commission previously went out to the landlord and tenants festival and passed out information. **Action Item: Commissioners were encouraged to connect with *Alive!***

The HR Commission's next guest speaker will be Kim Neal, Independent Police Auditor, April 18th. They are interested in the Police Review Board.

Action item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will organize a group to go to the Rainbow Crosswalk.

- *Aging Commission* – Nothing to report.
- *HIV/AIDS Commission* – This commission meets April 12, 2023.
- *DVP/SAC Wishlist* - https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry_custom_url&type=CHARITY
- The LGBTQ+ Task Force is having an event on June 3, 2023, at Market Square.
- Commissioner Wetmore drafted a letter nominating Commissioner Porter for the Alexandria Celebrates Women Award (14 – 21 years). The letter with the application is due Saturday, April 15, 2023. Chair Kramer moved that the Commission sign a letter of support; seconded by Commissioner Wetmore. All were in favor. None opposed. **Action Item: Commissioners will review the letter and respond to Commissioner Wetmore by Thursday April 13th.**
- *Vola Lawson Breast Cancer Fund*: Former Commissioner Teisha Garrett coordinated the Fund. Annually people would donate through Los Tios during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October). **Action Item: First Vice Chair Miner will contact Ms. Garrett about donations for "Giving Tuesday" during Spring 2 Action and will post on social media.**

Next Steps/Adjournment

Chair Kramer requested a motion to adjourn the meeting all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Subcommittees met.

Important Dates / Reminders / Announcements

- ✓ **Children's Mental Health Awareness Month (May)**