

Alexandria Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Crystal Kramer (1 excused absence); Anuja Miner (1 excused absence); Elisabeth Palmer Johnson; Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin; Yvette Jiang; Jennifer “Jenn” Stowe; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Lexi White; Shelley Brown; Emily Eckert and Nia Miller

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Jennifer Wetmore, Matthew Worner and Rachel Brill-Meckler; Jessica Barloga

OTHER ATTENDEES: Debra Evans, Domestic Violence Program/Sexual Assault Center (DVP/SAC), Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), LaTanya Chinagorom (DVP/SAC, DCHS) Charlotte Schrerer and Savannah Lane (member of the public).

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 7:10 p.m. This meeting was held in person and virtually via Zoom and was made open to the public for comment.

2. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2023 MINUTES

The September 2023 minutes were shared with the Commissioners during the meeting for review. A motion was made by Second Vice Chair Brown to pass the meeting minutes; seconded by Commissioner Witkin. All were in favor.

3. UPCOMING EVENTS

Silent Witness Candlelight Vigil: On Thursday, October 12th, the Domestic Violence Program will hold the annual Silent Witness Candlelight Vigil at Market Square. Set is from 5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. with the event beginning at 7 p.m. The program will feature life-size silhouettes. Families of victims will be in attendance, the Mayor will give the proclamation, the poet laureate will read two poems, and candles will be lit along with a reception afterwards.

Purple Out Day: Purple Out Day in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month will take place October 19th. All were encouraged to dress in purple.

Pumkin Painting Activity: Commissioners Witkin, First Vice Chair Miner and Second Vice Chair Brown volunteered for the pumpkin painting on Saturday, October 7th. The event was successful. They passed out flyers for the Affordable Housing event.

50th Anniversary Subcommittee: Chair Kramer solicited volunteers to act as Chair and Co-Chair of the 50th Anniversary Subcommittee. The venue is set along with the tentative date. Funding and donations are needed along with an application for a liquor license. It was suggested to have a caterer. The subcommittee requested all to assist with this event. Chair Kramer drafted a standard Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on fundraising for approval by the City Attorney. After it is approved, the Commission will vote on it. Afterward it will be submitted to Pat Miller's organization *Alexandria Celebrates Women!*

First Vice Chair Miner attended a fundraiser and met with Vice Mayor Amy Jackson about resources. **Action Item: All who have ideas or an event to share are asked to email Commissioner Wetmore. Action Item: Chair Kramer will draft a letter to *Alexandria Celebrates Women!* about what the Commission is planning by Wednesday, October 11th. Action Item: Debra Evans will check funding from DCHS.**

The subcommittees and volunteers for the anniversary are as follows:

- **Steering:** Commissioners Wetmore; Witkin; Stowe; Eckert; White and First Vice Chair Miner (all Commissioners are asked to be a part of this subcommittee)
- **Awards:** Commissioners Wetmore; Hutchinson; Jiang and Worner
- **Food/Decorating:** Commissioners Wetmore; Stowe; Palmer Johnson and First Vice Chair Miner
- **Fundraising:** Chair Kramer; Commissioner Eckert and First Vice Chair Miner
- **Publicity:** Commissioners Witkin; Stowe; White; Miller and Second Vice Chair Brown (all Commissioners are asked to be a part of this subcommittee)

The Commission agreed that they will not use an event planner – it was suggested that they can possibly find a George Mason University student from the hospitality program. **Action Item: Commissioner Stowe will see if she can have a student volunteer to assist with event planning. Action Item: The 50th Anniversary Subcommittee will revisit the topic of members, co-chairs, subcommittee meetings and funding at the Monday, October 23rd @ 6:30 p.m. meeting at 1225 First Street. The meeting will be hybrid. Action Item: LaTanya Chinagorom will post information on the City public website.**

4. GRAYSON COUNTY DRAFT SIGN-ON LETTER DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Chair Kramer and Debra Evans sent a draft letter from Commissioners White and Eckert to the Commission. The letter is up for a vote within the Commission. Commissioner White shared that Grayson County will propose an ordinance that it will be an “unborn sanctuary” banning medication abortion from being mailed within county limits. The topic will be shared on Thursday, December 14th at a public hearing. Chair Kramer

made a motion to approve the letter as written and authorize the Chair of the Commission to sign off on behalf of the Commission and submit it to the Grayson County Court Supervisors. First Vice Chair Miner seconded. One Commissioner abstained from the vote; the rest voted to approve and were in favor. **Action Item: Chair Kramer will work with Commissioner White on getting the letter signed and submitted.**

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

A call for volunteers to work on the Commission's social media. Instagram is now unblocked. Chair Kramer reached out to former Commission members who had access to the social media accounts and is awaiting their response. The City Attorney is still determining the rules of social media. **Action Item: Chair Kramer will reach out to the Vice Mayor on the topic.**

6. REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS

- *Affordable Housing & Transportation* –It was announced that the Affordable Housing & Transportation Subcommittee will host a hybrid webinar event entitled, *Can I Afford to Live in Alexandria?* Wednesday, October 18th, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., all virtual. They will offer ways on how to get involved. The info has been shared with other Commissions.
Members of the public are required to register before attending Commission meetings due to the Affordable Housing & Transportation Subcommittee meeting being crashed by rogue attendees from the public. Webinar mode will be used for future Zoom meetings. **Action Item: Commissioners were asked to prepare questions for the event panelists.**
- *DASH Representative Report Out* – DASH welcomed their first youth representative. They are having a Federal Transit Administration Onboard Riders Survey where there will be a person on the buses who will take data from riders. The Bus Stop Improvement Project involves the placement of bus shelters for the West End transit in the Landmark Area and the King Street bus improvement and condensing a few bus stops and have wheelchair access and adding two more languages Daari and Pashto. They also discussed holiday wraps for the buses.
- *Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking*: Debra Evans and Commissioner Stowe shared information about the Silent Witness Vigil to news Channel 4 to generate some interest. **Action Item: The Commission will discuss volunteer information in the October and November meetings.**
- *Reproductive Rights* – The subcommittee met and the draft letter to Grayson County was shared. They are looking towards 2024 and the advocacy work they would like to do. They will create a voting system for the items they have planned.

- Commissioner/City Council Engagement: All were encouraged to continue their relationship with City Council.
- Commission on Aging: There was no meeting due to not having a quorum. The next meeting is Thursday, October 12th.
- Human Rights (HR) Commission: Commissioner Palmer Johnson shared that the HR Commission held a webinar on Tuesday, September 19th (hybrid) on the development of human rights. There was an enactment of the Pregnant Workers Service Act, and they reviewed the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action and protected speech. Panelists were in attendance. During the in-person side of the event, the HR Commission provided childcare, refreshments, and reasonable disability accommodations.
This Commission sponsors new citizens, thus Citizenship Day was held on September 12th. The Rainbow Crosswalk is moving forward. The subcommittee met on Tuesday, October 10th. The Human Rights Commission, LGBTQ Task Force, TE&S and Debra Evans were in attendance. They worked with Councilman Kirk McPike on this project.
- HIV/AIDS Commission – Gloria Sitton spoke to the Commission about boards, commissions, processes, and procedures. Rodney McCoy spoke to the Commission on Aging. Upcoming dates are: National Aging HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, National LatinX AIDS Awareness Day, Sunday, October 15th and World AIDS Day on Friday, December 1st.
- DVP/SAC Wishlist - https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry_custom_url&type=CHARITY
- Commissioner Palmer Johnson made announcements on upcoming events:
 - The National Center for Women's Innovation's Gala will take place on Friday, October 27, 2023, at the Ritz Carlton. The price for a table is \$230.
 - The NAACP's 90th birthday celebration will take place on Saturday, October 21st at the Westin Hotel.
 - The 8th Democratic Committee will host its function on Thursday, October 19th at the Double Tree by Hilton at Crystal City. Congressman Gwen Moore will be their special guest. The lowest ticket is \$140. **Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will send the electronic flyers out for distribution by Debra Evans.**

Next Steps/Adjournment

Chair Kramer made a motion for the Commission meeting to end and be moved into subcommittee meetings. Commissioner Palmer Johnson so moved. First Vice Chair Miner seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.