

Alexandria Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Crystal Kramer (1 excused absence); Anuja Miner (1 excused absence); Elisabeth Palmer Johnson; Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin; Yvette Jiang; Lexi White; Shelley Brown; Emily Eckert and Jennifer Wetmore (1 excused absence); Matthew Worner (1 excused absence)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Nia Miller, Jessica Barloga (1 excused absence)

MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Jennifer “Jen” Stowe; T. Nicole Hutchinson and Rachel Brill-Meckler (1 excused absence)

OTHER ATTENDEES: LaTanya Chinagorom, Domestic Violence Program/Sexual Assault Center (DVP/SAC), Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), David Ulloa, MS, and Zoha Zafar, Alexandria Mentoring Partnership.

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 7:07 p.m. This meeting did not have a quorum at the beginning. Later a quorum was established at 7:47 p.m. This meeting was held in person and virtually via Zoom and was made open to the public for comment.

2. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2023 MINUTES

The October 2023 minutes were shared with the Commissioners during the meeting for review. An edit was suggested, but the edit was already made pre-meeting. Chair Kramer requested a motion to pass the meeting minutes as amended. First Vice Chair Miner motioned to approve the meeting minutes as amended; Seconded by Commissioner Eckert; Commissioner Wetmore abstained; the rest of the Commission were in favor.

3. GUEST SPEAKER: DAVID ULLOA, MS – ALEXANDRIA MENTORING PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR, CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Mr. David Ulloa presented on the Alexandria Mentoring Project and its vast opportunities that they provide to the young people in the community of Alexandria. He also shared their Children Youth Community Plan Report Card, powerful testimonials (as well as his own), and statistics that mentoring works. He also encouraged all to participate as a mentor in one of their eleven programs.

4. ALEXANDRIA BUDGET PROPOSALS

Kate Garvey, Director DCHS, received a letter that she shared with the Boards and Commissions with regard to budget proposal. Responses are asked back by November 21st. A vote was requested. The Commission will discuss budget items and will include the 50th anniversary in the ask.

DASH Advisory Board wants to push the maintenance of current service. They do not want to cut any existing bus lines (32, 34, and 31). Their three wish list items are to improve three lines services. They want to push more into the capital improvement signs. The letter they submitted to the City Manager, dated October 27, 2023 was reviewed. Commissioners voted on budget items they will push forward to Kate Garvey on November 14th.

Commissioner Palmer Johnson requested to make a motion that the Commission support their DASH Advisory Committee representative, Commissioner Jiang's, recommendations towards the budget for DASH. Chair Kramer motioned; Second Vice Chair Brown seconded; all were in favor.

Commissioner White mentioned the City is allocating a budget toward healthcare. She would like the Commission to advocate for funding for reproductive right centers/training/education. It was suggested they forward a broader context and follow up with the City Manager or DCHS Director. **Action Item: All were asked to keep in mind that the budget is due annually in September.**

Second Vice Chair Brown motioned that the Commission approve that the budget listed info would go forward to Kate Garvey. Seconded by First Vice Chair Miner.

Chair Kramer moved to support DCHS's budget request. All were in favor. None opposed. Non abstained.

5. 50TH ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATES AND NEXT STEPS

- Update from City Attorney's Office – A meeting was held in July 2023 with the City Attorney, Chair Kramer and Debra Evans. It was determined that there are three ways for a Commission to raise funds without fundraising. 1) Partner with a Friends group and develop an MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) 2) Accept donations and create a bank account where the City representatives, Debra Evans and LaTanya Chinagorom would be the ones providing access to the funding. 3) Put it on the City as a docket item for them to approve the funding.

The MOA that was previously put together was disapproved by the City Attorney. The new City Attorney, Sheron Ivory, begins on January 8, 2024. It was suggested to revisit this subject and plan for a basic event for now when the new City Attorney comes on board and to rescale/rethink the event.

The 50th Anniversary Planning Committee needs a Chair and Co-Chair. It was noted that the Commission on Aging receives funding, but it is in the budget. It was suggested to speak with Vice Mayor Jackson revisiting the subject of funding the event. The budget letter request was changed to \$10K. Chair Kramer motioned to put forth the budget letter to Kate Garvey for \$10K from DCHS.

Commissioner Wetmore motioned; Second Vice Chair Brown seconded. All were in favor. None

opposed. **Action Item: Commissioner Wetmore will arrange getting on Vice Mayor Jackson's schedule. LaTanya Chinagorom will confirm with the Commission on Aging members as to whether they have a Memorandum of Understanding or not.**

6. DISCUSSION OF UPCOMING EVENTS REQUIRING ACFW VOLUNTEERS/PARTICIPATION

- December 14th Domestic Violence Shelter Holiday Party: All unwrapped gifts can be dropped off at 123 N Pitt St. Volunteers must be officially trained for other duties. To help set up, show up at First Baptist Church of Alexandria between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. **Action Item: The Chair Kramer will send all the details in an email.**
- Domestic Violence Bookmarks at Alexandria City Metro Stations- Commissioner Stowe discussed this event at a subcommittee meeting. She will follow up with Debra Evans on the facilitation. A permit is not required. Two Commissioners should stand at the Metro stations in the evening. Bookmarks will be picked up from Debra Evans. Commissioner Palmer Johnson expressed interest in having the Rotary Group partner with Commissioners on this distribution. **Action Item: Contact Debra Evans and LaTanya Chinagorom for instructions on partnering in reference to distributing bookmarks (due to it being a DCHS event).**

7. REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS

- Affordable Housing & Transportation Subcommittee – This subcommittee presented a webinar that was successful. The recording is on the website. There were many questions presented by the public. Kudos were extended for a great job. The Commission on Aging put forth questions.
- DASH Representative Report Out – For report, see under budget proposals.
- Survivor's Support Subcommittee: The name Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking Subcommittee changed its name to Survivor's Support Subcommittee. Commissioner Wetmore shared the bookmark handouts. Continue the momentum that they started with the Human Trafficking Awareness month from 2023. They want to keep it on the same scale in regards to awareness and raising funding in January 2024. They discussed with the owner and discussed with the manager at Beeliner Diner in reference to partnering in providing donations from proceeds directly to the DV Shelter. The Vola Lawson Breast Cancer Awareness fundraiser was previously done through Los Tios. They also discussed mentoring with David Ulloa and passing out bookmarks to other locations quarterly, such as the Farmers' Market, and volunteering opportunities at the Children's Holiday Party.

- Reproductive Rights – Last month a letter from the Commission for Women was sent to Grayson County proposing effort to make the county a sanctuary. Thanks were extended to Commissioner White and Chair Kramer for submitting the letter. Commendations were extended for the Silent Witness Candlelight Vigil.
Commissioner White will have an update on Grayson County’s hearing soon. This is legislation time. Commissioner Eckert sent a survey to get information on the strategic planning session.
- Commissioner/City Council Engagement: Councilman Kirk McPike will give a presentation on the zones on November 28, 2023. The City Manager will make the report out on what they will be doing on the City Rainbow Crosswalk.
- Commission on Aging: The Commission on Aging met Thursday, November 2nd and had two guest speakers, Jessica Fredrickson who spoke on Brain Health and the other presenter discussed the Ladray Redevelopment Plan. They will create a new development with parking amenities and a percentage of the units will have affordable housing. There is a lot of concern about the seniors and relocating them. The contract for the development has been awarded and discussions are ongoing.
- Human Rights (HR) Commission – Commissioner Palmer Johnson was selected as a Vice Chair to the HR Commission’s Outreach. The Alexandria Police Chief was at the meeting. Alexandria has made history by hiring the first Assistant Alexandria Police Chief in the City of Alexandria on October 23, 2023. She will come to speak to the Alexandria Commission for Women. The HR Commission will meet on November 21st. Anna McClure will be the HR Commission Liaison with the City.

Commissioner Palmer Johnson will be doing an analysis on the School Resource Officers. Thanks were extended to all who supported Commissioner Palmer Johnson. They raised almost \$200K that night for a Women’s Right to Choose. The fundraiser took place at Commissioner Palmer Johnson’s home on November 27th. Governor of Maryland, Wes Moore, and former and current Commissioners attended as well.

- HIV/AIDS Commission-None.
- Survivor Support - https://www.target.com/gift-registry/gift-giver?registryId=6bcf0c70-bc6c-11eb-9092-54ed1d7afa55&lnk=registry_custom_url&type=CHARITY

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 9:05 p.m.