

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING
Meeting: Thursday, April 11, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Del Pepper Community Resource Center, Room 9208

Draft Minutes

This meeting was recorded.

Commissioners Participating in Person: Michael Schuster (Chairman), Enid Borden, James Bruen, Barbara D'Agostino, Kathleen Demik, Alan Dinsmore, Marshall Hespe, Jessica Lefevre, Tom Reeder, Ana Rivas-Beck, Lois Steele, Gerri Wallace, Jane King, Jenn Stowe, David Kaplan, Victoria Rutson

Members Participating by Videoconference: Barbara Huelat, Ray Biegun

Members Absent with Permission from the Chair: Canek Aguirre, Jenn Stowe, James Lindsay

Liaisons Participating in Person: Bob Eifert, At Home Alexandria

Liaisons and City Staff Participating by Videoconference: Juanita Balenger, St. Martins Senior Center, Ian Torrance, Police Department, Pam Guerra, Senior Center at Charles Houston, Jan Macidull, Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, Glynis Laborde, Community Health Director at Inova Health System, Harold Little, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Chris Moore, Division of Aging and Adult Services, Darrell Wesley, Alexandria Adult Day Care Center, Kate Chutuape, VHC Health

City Staff Participating in Person: Ashley Johnson and Pamela Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services

Members of the Public Participating by Videoconference: Cedar Dvorin

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

The proposed agenda was unanimously approved.

The draft minutes of the meeting of March 14, 2024, were unanimously approved.

Sergeant Torrance of the Alexandria Police Department was available for questions. He indicated that Alexandria reached a significant milestone in its Vision Zero program with no traffic fatalities in 2023.

Gail Kohn, the District of Columbia Age-Friendly Coordinator, provided a special presentation on the background for developing a successful Age-Friendly plan, in anticipation of the Commission working on Alexandria's next Age-Friendly plan.

Liaison Reports:

Michael Schuster indicated that April 29, 2024, will be Senior Day at the Virginia Assembly, sponsored by Virginia's Area Agencies on Aging. Pamela Austin reminded the Commission that notice of a Commission or Committee meeting, along with the agenda of the meeting, should be emailed to her at least three-days prior to the meeting in order to meet FOIA requirements. Chris Moore announced that Barbara Ravenell, the senior nutritionist for the Division of Aging and Adult

Services, will be retiring. Ashley Johnson indicated that the Division of Aging and Adult Services would be working with a social worker to get insights into the effects of the redevelopment of the Ladrey complex on its residents.

Tom Reeder reported that the Human Rights Council approved a letter to the City Council recommending the adoption of a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza war.

Jane King reported that AARP is focusing on sponsoring “Scam Jams” to help people defend against scams directed at older people, which are becoming more targeted and sophisticated with the use of artificial intelligence.

Michael Schuster reported on his meeting with Councilperson Bagley regarding the fiscal year 2025 budget.

Juanita Balenger provided a report on the past and upcoming events on the Saint Martins de Porres Senior Center.

Kate Chutuape provided a report on upcoming events at VHC (formerly Virginia Health Center), including a wellness fair on Saturday, April 13.

Pam Guerra reported on the activities at the Charles Houston Senior Center, including the Dance for All Ages at Alexandria City High School on Friday, April 19, an upcoming field trip to the White House, and participation in health fairs in May.

Marshall Hespe reported on behalf of Senior Services of Alexandria that there will be a Robust Walkathon on May 7 in Ben Brenman Park and a Health and Fitness Fair at the Lee Center on May 23. He also indicated that SSA was making progress in its outreach to the Ethiopian community.

For the Successful Aging Committee, Harold Little reported that the spring and summer program guide is available (download or paper copy) from the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities and reminded the Commission of the upcoming Dance for All Ages.

Darrell Wesley reported on the activities at the Lee Center, including its commemoration of Women’s History Month.

Jan Macidull reported that the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee met on April 4, and discussed the fiscal year 2024 Draft Annual Action Plan for Housing and Community Development. The public comment period for the plan is April 19, 2024, and it will be presented to Council for a vote on April 24.

Discussion/Action Items:

Jane King distributed copies of the draft Age Friendly Report, which still needs minor changes before it is presented to Council.

Michael Schuster presented an overview of the newly enacted electronic meeting rules and discussed a draft of the Commission’s policy for approval at the May meeting. He also announced that need to create a nominating committee for new Commission officers.

Barbara D’Agostino announced that the four awardees of the annual Excellence in Aging Awards had been chosen, but announcement is pending notification of those awardees.

Chris Moore and Kate Garvey have agreed to provide a letter to Council in support of the Commission on Aging for the Commission of the Year Impact Award.

Committee Updates:

On behalf of the Outreach Committee, Marshall Hespe announced that the Mindfulness would be inaugurated during the week of April 15 at 8 locations throughout the City.

Alan Dinsmore announced that the Transportation Committee would meet on April 17 at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.

Jessica Lefevre reported that the Economic Security and Civic Engagement Committee would continue to publicize the Silver Service Card and the upcoming Senior Law Day on June 8. The Shark Tank idea is still being developed by Jim Lindsay. And the Committee is discussing how to assist Alexandrians who face food insecurity but do not have access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Barbara Huelat announced that the Health/Dementia Friendly Committee will be meeting on Thursday, April 18 at Patrick Henry Community Center.

It was announced that Alexandria Families for Safe Streets will meet on April 16 at 6:30 to discuss a possible Council candidate survey and an AARP grant for walkable safe streets.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.