

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING
Meeting: Thursday, June 13, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Del Pepper Community Resource Center, Room 9208

Minutes

This meeting was recorded.

Present: Commissioners Participating in Person: Michael Schuster (Chairman), Canek Aguirre, Enid Borden, James Bruen, Barbara D'Agostino, Kathleen Demik, Jane King, David Kaplan, Daniel Thomas Oliver, Victoria Rutson, Jennifer Stowe, Gerri Wallace,

Present: Members Participating by Videoconference with Permission from the Chair Due to Personal Matters: Ray Biegun, Marshall Hespe, Tom Reeder, Ana Rivas-Beck

Members Absent with Permission from the Chair Due to Personal Matters: Alan Dinsmore, Barbara Huelat, Joy Kone, Jessica Lefevre, Jim Lindsay

Members Absent: Joy Kone

Liaisons and Committee Chairs Participating in Person: Blanca Calli, VHC Health, Harold Little, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Lois Steele, Housing Committee Co-Chair

Liaisons and City Staff Participating by Videoconference: Pam Guerra, Senior Center at Charles Houston, Chris Moore, Division of Aging and Adult Services

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

Members of the Public Participating by Videoconference: None

Lacking a quorum at 4:00, the Chair began with introductions of the Commissioners, including the newest Commissioner, Daniel Thomas (DT) Oliver, and continued with non-business items.

Liaison Reports:

Ashley Johnson reported that the Division of Aging and Adult Services was actively promoting the Virginia Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, under which eligible seniors age 60 or over can receive \$50 in vouchers that can be used at farmer's markets. The vouchers are being issued between June 1 and September 30 and must be used by November 17. Seniors can apply online or get assistance in applying from the Division of Aging and Adult Services.

Tom Reeder attempted to provide an oral report of the activities of the Human Rights Commission, but the oral portion of his presentation did not come through.

Michael Schuster announced that the Northern Virginia Aging Network is preparing materials for its annual Legislative Breakfast, which will be held on September 20.

Blanca Calli announced that VHC Health would be sponsoring a Senior Housing Fair on June 28 at 10 am at the Lubber Run Community Center in Arlington.

Jennifer Stowe indicated that there was no quorum for the May meeting of the Commission on Women and the June meeting will be held on June 18.

Pam Guerra provided a written report for the Charles Houston Community Center and indicated that the Center has been sponsoring field trips, including one to the US Capitol. The field trips will continue in June.

Michael Schuster and Jim Bruen reported that the Senior Law Day took place on June 8 and it was well organized and well attended and provided a wealth of information.

Following an introduction by Chris Moore, Erika Callaway Kleiner, the LGBTQ+ Task Force and Violence Prevention Project Manager for the City of Alexandria, made a presentation on working with older LGBTQ+ adults. She provided a history of the Task Force and its purpose to make LGBTQ+ individuals and families feel welcome by City services. She provided facts about aging LGBTQ+ persons and the difficulty of gathering data. She also discussed the intersectionality with race, ethnicity, age and other statuses. She also reported on the very successful City Pride Fair on June 1, which included the dedication of the two rainbow crosswalks in front of City Hall. She indicated that Commissioner Ray Biegun has been an active member of the Task Force and he provided commentary via videoconference. She encouraged the Commission to consider LGBTQ+ issues in formulating Alexandria's next Age Friendly Plan.

There being a quorum at 4:56 pm, the business portion of the meeting began.

Jane King indicated that the report of the 2019-2023 Age Friendly Plan would be presented for approval to the City Council on June 25.

Michael indicated that also on June 25 the Council would be making a presentation to the Commission as this year's winner of the most impactful commission in the City and Commissioners interested in attending should let Ashley know. Michael also indicated that we would be able to have two more meetings virtually and solicited suggestions as to which meetings those should be.

The 2024-2025 officers of the Commission were sworn in by Councilman Aguirre, as follows:
Michael Schuster, Chair
Barbara D'Agostino: Vice Chair
Ana Rivas-Beck, Secretary.

Committee Updates:

For the Housing Committee, Lois Steele reported on the progress of the Ladrey redevelopment project that would involve relocation of residents beginning next year and expected completion of the project in 2028. She indicated that the Committee was beginning to think about the Age Friendly Plan and perhaps using a community survey with respect to housing.

Barbara D'Agostino reported that the outreach committee would be meeting in July.

Jim Bruen reported that the June Transportation Committee meeting was canceled. At the May meeting there was a discussion of the increased use of DASH and issues involved with motorized bicycles and scooters. David Kaplan added that last year was DASH's highest ridership year with 4.5 million trips and this year will likely surpass 5 million. He also discussed the planning of changes to the WMATA system and that input is being collected until July 15. Councilman Aguirre added that there are concerns for Northern Virginia routes in the WMATA redesign.

For the Economic Security Committee, Gerri Wallace reported that they have been discussing the adequacy of the SNAP program. Michael Schuster indicated that an increase in the level of SNAP benefits will be a legislative priority of NVAN. Gerri indicated that on June 24 there will be a meeting of the Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness. She indicated that the Committee has begun to think about the development of the upcoming Age Friendly Plan.

Discussion/Action Items:

The draft minutes of the meeting of May 9, 2024, were unanimously approved.

DT Oliver presented an idea to provide banners along main thoroughfares recognizing older Alexandria veterans. It is a project that has been successful in other cities to recognize service by citizens and increase pride in community. There was favorable discussion and an interest in pursuing the idea further.

Harold Little reported for the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Departments that summer activities were ongoing. Persons interested persons can participate in the Silver Artisans program beginning in August at Patrick Henry Recreation Center. The Senior 4th of July picnic will take place at Mount Vernon Recreation Center on July 6 and the Senior Cookout on July 26 at Chick Armstrong Center. There is also the Del Rey walking club, pickleball at various places in the City, table tennis at William Ramsey.

David Kaplan indicated that Council was discussing the possibility of providing a small cash stipend to some City commissioners to encourage broader participation by more people in the commission process. He indicated that the Commission on Aging might want to weigh in on the issue.

The approval of the Pickett Street comments was carried over until the next COA when the Transportation Committee will be present to discuss them.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm.

The next Commission meeting will be Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 4 PM, at 4850 Mark Center Drive.

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be September 9, 2024, at 1:30 p.m., at Goodwin House-Alexandria.