

# **ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING AGENDA**

**Meeting – Thursday, September 12, 2024**

**Mark Center - Del Pepper Community Center, 4850 Mark Center Drive – Alexandria VA  
22311**

**Room 9208 – 9<sup>th</sup> Floor**

This meeting was recorded.

**Present: Commissioners Participating in Person:** Alan Dinsmore, Ana Rivas Beck, Barbara D’Agostino, Barbara Heulat, DT Oliver, Gerri Wallace, James Bruen, Jennifer Towe, Jessica Lefevre, Jim Lindsay, Kathleen Demik, Marshall Hespe, Michael Schuster, Ray Biegun, Victoria Rutson, William Thomas Reeder, Enid Borden

**Present: Members Participating by Videoconference with Permission from the Chair Due to Personal Matters:** Canek Aguirre, David Kaplan, Jane King

**Members Absent with Permission from the Chair Due to Personal Matters:** None

**Members Absent:** Joy Kone

**Liaisons and Committee Chairs Participating in Person:** Bob Effert with Housing Committee, Harold Little with Recreation, Parks, Cultural Activities

**Liaisons and Committee Chairs Participating via Teleconference:** Christopher Moore with DAAS, Darrell Wesley with ADSC, Gaynelle Diaz with ARHA & Senior Center @ Charles Houston, Sgt. Ian Torrance with Alex Police Dept, Jan Macidull with Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, Juanita Balenger with St. Martins Senior Center.

**City Staff Participating in Person:** Ashley Johnson with DAAS and Pam Austin with DAAS

**Members of the Public Participating by Video Conference:** None

Quorum was met with 21 members present.

## **Liason Reports:**

Alexandria City Policy Department - Sgt. Ian Torrance reported on the speed cameras near the school. There was a recent article about enforcement, making the process more efficient. The speed cameras are on and enforceable only when the lights are blinking which is during the school departure and arrival times. He also reported on

the investigation of an officer-involved shooting in the City of Alexandria. The investigation was taken over by state police. Also the police department posted on Facebook about a scooter driver who hit a parked vehicle that resulted in serious injuries to the scooter operator. The police department is looking for witnesses of this event.

**Division of Aging and Adult Services** – Chris Moore reported on a very busy summer and visits from the Virginia deputy commissioner for aging services. They received many calls for assistance. As a result, the division is hiring a temp for CRIA (community referral information and assistance) calls which should help the current staff member with fielding the calls.

**Human Rights Commission** – Tom Reeder reported that there are new elected officers and a new president who is Jon Thompson. Vice chairs are Mark Bendick and PJ Palmer. They heard from Darrlyn Franklin, the head of NAACP for the City of Alexandria. They also met with Matt Henry, an Alexandria City high school teacher who was verbally harassed by students because of his sexual identity and he reported it and nothing is happening. The Human Right Commission and Office of Human Rights do not have jurisdiction over this matter. So Mr. Henry has to go through the public school system to address the incident.

**AHA** – Bob Eiffert reported that the organization is back to full fall schedule. There is an event coming up at Beatley Library which is being co-sponsored with Senior Services of Alexandria. It is open to the public to discuss older adult housing options after retirement or after a certain age.

**AARP** – Jane King reported that in September AARP will hold an event at the Building Museum in DC to discuss accessory dwelling units. There is new research on LGBTQ adults and their needs. Another program is being organized to help parents on how to use new technology. Finally, AARP will be introducing Artificial Intelligence to their members.

**NVAN** – Michael Schuster reported on the Legislative Breakfast on September 20th. This will be the best attended breakfast by Delegates and Senators.

**St. Martins de Porres Senior Center** – Juanita Balenger reported on the highlights this summer. They hired a part-time Operation Assistant. In September they have the Fenwick Foundation visiting. They provide dental appointments for older adults and

this Fall they have new participants and returning older adults to receive the dental services. There was a field trip to the Natural Museum and they are taking them to the Dutch Village Farmers Market in Upper Marlboro. They are also going to pop-up farmer's market at Patrick Henry. Finally, the entire center celebrated Ethiopian New Year's, where all members dressed in white

**Commission for Women** – Jenn Stowe reported on the survey sent to city residents. There will be a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on September 24<sup>th</sup> at City Hall and that will kick off the year. The Commission is working on its Annual Reports and the first draft is out. They are also working on their legislative priorities for the year. They held a retreat to discuss survivor support for domestic violence, affordable housing and reproductive health. Next meeting is scheduled for October 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Senior Center @ Charles Houston** – Pamela Guerra has left the Senior Center so Gaynelle Diaz reported on her behalf. The center is looking to hire a new person. Older adults are still involved in all center activities. They are getting ready for the center's anniversary of 52 years. There will be an October vaccination clinic at two different centers. They are also working with the Department of Health to do a presentation on respiratory illnesses and also have older adults participate in a community health survey.

**Senior Services of Alexandria** – Marshall Hespe reported on the work done at the Claridge House with the Ethiopian population. They did glaucoma screenings; provided support to help older adults to register to vote, which was done in partnership with the Board of Elections, who provided a seminar to explain how an individual can register to vote on their own. They also conducted an SSA survey with volunteers, clients and senior ambassadors. This will help with a strategic action plan for the future. Upcoming events include - a robust walkathon next week, Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at Brenman Park (rain day is September 24<sup>th</sup>). Oktoberfest will be held at Port City Brewery on October 9<sup>th</sup> – Tickets can be purchased on line and it will be a fun night of music, good food and a nice get together. SSA will also hold a Volunteer Appreciation Day in November.

**Arlington Legislative Committee** – Michael Schuster reported that he will be meeting with the Arlington Legislative group and Commission on Aging next week.

**Successful Aging Committee** – Harold Little reported that they are planning the Robust Walkathon. They have a new newsletter which is available to all older adults,

letting them know about the new activities around the city and senior centers. They will hold a Masquerade Ball in October.

**Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities** – Harold Little reported that Art classes are being held at the Claridge House. They are starting up the VICAP and Medicare enrollment at all senior centers. This will help to determine if an individual is enrolled in the right Medicare program to serve their health care needs.

**Alexandria Adult Day Services Center, ADSC** – Darrell Wesley reported on the interviews that are being conducted to cover the new vacancy position for a Therapeutic Management position. He also reported that Virginia Legislators passed legislation to change the name of Adult Day Care Centers to Adult Day Centers. This removed the “day care” definition which allows them to increase focus on “adult settings”. They have also scheduled many activities and entertainment for the senior for the fall season

### **Committee Updates -**

Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, AHAAC – Jan Macidull reported that the Alexandria West Plan has been deferred again by the Planning Commission for a variety of reasons. One reason is they are looking for more plans to mitigate loss of affordable housing and a plan to increase affordable housing. She reported that much of the meeting dealt with their proposed legislative priorities which is due to the City Manager’s office by October 4<sup>th</sup>. Various proposals were considered, such as making affordable housing contributions mandatory premised on city policies and needs. Currently, if a developer wants to increase density or get special zoning, the developer would be required to provide affordable housing proffers. Also discussed was HB1028 (2024) that would allow localities to require set asides for affordable assisted living. They also discussed HB 1398 (2024) giving localities the right of first refusal for certain kinds of affordable publicly subsidized housing. There was also discussion about converting churches into affordable housing. Churches are zoned in a particular way, but this proposal would allow them to build affordable housing without having to deal with restrictive rezoning requirements. They also discussed HB 721 (2024) to address rent price gouging. The kick-off for Housing 2040 Master Plan will be held on September 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm and it is a virtual event. They are seeking input from City residents.

**Special Presentation:** David Lanier, Assistant City Attorney - The New Alexandria City Electronic Meeting Policy – he reported on the new policy with a power point

presentation. Michael Schuster stated that the policy was adopted by the Committee but he was here to explain it further. The Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allow public bodies to meet through electronic communication means in 3 different circumstances – 1) remote participation by an individual member for certain approved circumstances where a quorum of the public body is otherwise physically assembled; 2) all virtual meetings if a state of emergency has been declared by the Governor or the locality; and 3) a public body may meet virtually up to half of its scheduled meetings.

For our purposes, we cannot hold back to back virtual meetings. We must alternative. It was decided that all odd numbered months will be held in person (i.e. January, March, etc.) and all even numbered months will be held virtually.

Michael Schuster asked for clarification on how the adopted policy would be implemented since we operate off a fiscal year basis and the policy is being adopted on a calendar year. This is important because of the limited number of meetings that can be missed and we don't want to violate any policies by going over the number of virtual meetings allowed. Mr. Lanier explained that the City would be adopting the policy again in June 2025. So it is likely we are following the fiscal year rather than the calendar year for purposes of having a written electronic meeting policy.

**Executive Committee Report** – Michael Schuster did not provide any report.

## **Discussion / Action Items**

**Future Scheduled Meetings** – A motion approved that all even months are virtual and all odd months are in person. It was approved unanimously by the Commission.

The October meetings for the whole Commission and Executive Committee will be virtual. In November, the meeting at DASH Headquarters in November will be in person. December will be virtual and then in person in January.

**NVAN 2025 Legislative and Budget Priorities** – Michael Schuster sent us the 6 NVAN priorities; there were no questions about the priorities.

Michael Schuster explained the process for submitting legislative proposals. They must be submitted online by October 4<sup>th</sup>. Also we are working with other commissions to make sure that the proposals are coordinated.

Committee unanimously approved the NVAN Legislative Platform as the COA's legislative priorities for submission into the Alexandria City Legislative Package.

### **Age Friendly Plan: Next Steps – JANE KING**

Jane discussed the timeline for developing the new Age Friendly Plan by the Fall of 2025. An ad hoc committee meets regularly to plan the next steps.

### **Approval of Pickett Street Comments**

The commission approved the comments unanimously.

### **Silverado Rezoning Hearing on October 1, 2024**

The item for the Planning Commission's consideration was moved up to November or December 2024. Tom Reeder spoke – Silverado has a proposal to increase their current space from 66 to 90 beds. Ms. Puskar, Silverado's attorney was at the Executive Committee meeting and presented its proposal.

A Commission member asked if Silverado is looking for an endorsement. Michael Schuster said the COA is only gathering information at this point.

The Committee had a discussion about the increase in the number of affordable beds – either AG (auxiliary grants) beds or discounted beds. Our effort is to best negotiate what we can within our purview. Commissioners can go to the hearing and testify as individuals. Important to make a distinction between discounted and affordable.

### **Speaker for Next Month**

A speaker from DASH is scheduled for October; Michael Schuster suggested that there be a presentation on Birmingham Green this year which is located in Manassas, Virginia.

### **Annual Report to City Council due September 30, 2024**

The Commission approved it unanimously.

## **Committee Updates**

- 1.** Housing Committee - Co-Chairs, Michael Schuster and Lois Steele – the Committee has not met.
- 2.** Outreach Committee – Co-Chairs, Marshall Hespe & Barbara D’Agostino just sent out the agenda today.
- 3.** Transportation – Chair, Alan Dinsmore – the Committee will meet on September 18<sup>th</sup> and guest speaker is from DASH.
- 4.** Economic Security and Civic Engagement – Chair, Jessica Lefevre – the Committee met previous Thursday. They are trying to focus on items that support the Age Friendly Plan. Jim Lindsey is working on the Shark Tank program that can also be open to the public. Ashley spearheaded pop-up farmer’s markets that increase the use of food vouchers. DAAD is also looking to increase adult participation in the SNAP program by getting a grant to fund two-part time positions.
  
- 5.** Health /Dementia Friendly Committee – Chair, Barbara Huelat – the Committee will meet next Thursday.

## **11. Other Business**

The COA discussed delaying the start of the meetings by thirty minutes so to avoid rush hour traffic in getting to Mark Center.

DASH party – September 19<sup>th</sup> at William Ramsey Rec Center – food giveaways, family friendly, to celebrate increased use of dash

AHA EVENT SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> AT BEATLEY LIBRARY. Need to register in advance. The topic is availability of older adult housing options.

**New Business - None**

**Public comments – please limit your comments to 3 minutes –**

No Comments

**Adjournment –** The meeting adjourned at 6:03.