



**City of Alexandria
Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Annual Report / FTCHV
July 2023 – June 2024**

The Alexandria Commission for the Arts (the Arts Commission) is pleased to present its Annual Report for the fiscal year 2023-2024 (FY2024).

The Arts Commission provides leadership in developing a vibrant and sustainable arts community that engages audiences. It also encourages support and appreciation for the arts as a cornerstone of Alexandria's identity and cultural, social, and economic vitality.

The mission of the Arts Commission is established by City ordinance (Article K, Sec. 2-4-91) and is as follows:

Advise Alexandria City Council with regard to policies that will strengthen the arts and further public access to the arts and cultural matters identified by the City Council;

Establish and periodically review criteria and standards for arts grant applications for city funds and accountability for the use of such funds;

Allocate from such funds to eligible organizations and activities as may be appropriated by the City Council for such purpose;

Review the public art annual work plan as developed by the office of the arts and a work plan task force and make recommendations to the city council as part of the budget process;

Review and approve public art project plans for specific public art projects, and to review and approve artist selection and concept development;

Create committees and task forces, as necessary, to focus on public art project development and artist selection;

Review proposals for donations of public art and commemorative art and make recommendations to the City Council;

Collaborate with the Alexandria Office of the Arts on public art project evaluations;

Support public communication and outreach as related to the arts; and,

Serve as citizen liaisons to City planning initiatives when public art is involved.

For FY2024, the Arts Commission included the following members:

Scott Abeles, Public at Large/Arts Consumer
Christina Calloway Baucom, Public at Large/Arts Consumer *
Alvah Beander, Expertise in Visual Arts
Stacey Becker, Professional in Arts/Cultural Development
Gayle Converse, Public at Large/Arts Consumer *
Marcee Craighill, Professional in Field/Arts Disciplines
Catherine Dehoney, Professional in Field/Arts Disciplines
Allison Heck, professional in Cityscape/Architecture*
Robin Jordan, Expertise in Visual Arts
Brian Kelley, Chair, Expertise in Visual Arts
Chris (William) Kurowski, Professional in Arts/Cultural Development
Jason Longfellow, Professional in Field/Arts Disciplines
Paul Painter, 1st Vice Chair, Public at Large/Arts Consumer
David Pritzker, Professional in Field/Arts Disciplines
Trena Raines, Professional in Cityscape/Architecture
Hosai Rasuli, Student Member *
Dawn Rogala, Professional in Field/Arts Disciplines
Ashley Smith, Public at Large/Arts Consumer
Tiffany Williams, Expert in Visual Arts*

The Executive Committee of the Arts Commission consisted of:

Brian Kelley, Chair
Paul Painter, 1st Vice Chair
Allison Heck, 2nd Vice Chair
Gayle Converse, Secretary

The Arts Commission also received support and assistance from Diane Ruggiero, Meika Daus, Cheryl Anne Colton and Matthew Harwood of the Alexandria Office of the Arts.

Summary Of Accomplishments

In furtherance of its mission, the Arts Commission completed the following activities during FY2024:

* Denotes a Commissioner whose term ended, or otherwise left the Arts Commission, during FY24.

- Maintained a quorum for all meetings from September 2023 to June 2024.
- Held regular meetings of the Executive Committee to set meeting agendas and priorities.
- Planned and attended a commission retreat on May 18, 2024 that focused on goal setting and strategic planning.
- Reviewed 29 applications for the City’s Annual Arts Program Grants and approved a funding scenario that awarded a total of \$242,082—an increase of 40% in funding compared to FY2024. Twenty-seven applicants received funding, which represents a 23% increase in the number of grantees compared to FY2024.
- Hosted the following informative speakers at regular Arts Commission meetings and retreats:
 - Assistant City Attorney David Lanier spoke about rules and guidelines for Commissioners; and
 - Deputy City Clerk & Clerk of Council Keia waters spoke about how the City can support Boards and Commission in Alexandria.
- Attended and took part in arts and cultural activities and events throughout the city, such as opening of Site See: Interstellar Influencer (Make an Impact) at Waterfront Park, the Scottish Walk Parade, the Ballyshanners St. Patrick’s Day Parade, and multiple arts events put on by arts organizations supported by city grants.
- Coordinated, with the assistance of the Executive Committee, a City Council coffee meeting between Arts Commissioners Brian Kelley and Dawn Rogala and City Councilmember Canek Aguirre to discuss arts-related issues in the City.
- Executive Committee members Brian Kelley and Paul Painter attended an information session given by the City Clerk’s Office and the City Attorney’s Office related to FOIA and other rules for Boards and Commissions.

Alexandria Commission for the Arts Committees

The Arts Commission oversaw the activities of two committees that are under the guidance of the Arts Commission.

City Council Committee

The City Council Committee helps members of the Arts Commission maintain regular communication with City Council on important arts topics in the City of Alexandria. Arts Commissioner Dawn Rogala currently chairs the Committee. The City Council Committee keeps commissioners updated on the Alexandria City Council meeting calendar, assists commissioners with questions about City Council meeting attendance and individual letter writing, and communicates with commissioners regarding advocacy opportunities that align with the city’s annual budget, grant, and small plan development schedule. The City Council Committee Chair and Arts Commissioners attended and delivered remarks related to arts grant funding at the October 14, 2023 City Council public hearing meeting.

During Alexandria’s FY2025 budget planning cycle, the City Council Committee worked with Commission members to draft letters of support for increased arts grant funding. We believe that this activity contributed to an increase to the FY25 Arts Program Grant budget of \$71,000. This is the ***first increase to the Arts Program Grant in over ten years*** and demonstrates the Arts Commission’s ongoing support of the arts organizations and artists who provide programs for the residents of Alexandria.

Nominating Committee

Arts Commissioners Marcee Craighill and Jason Longfellow served on the Nominating Committee. This committee contacted commissioners regarding serving on the Executive Committee and presented a slate of candidates for the Executive Committee during the May regular meeting. The election for the Executive Committee was held in the June regular meeting. Upon announcing the slate, the Nominating Committee was disbanded and will be reformed next year.

Alexandria Commission for the Arts Task Forces

The Arts Commission appointed members to and oversaw the activities of one task force that is under the guidance of the Arts Commission.

Grants Task Force

Arts Commissioners Catherine Dehoney and Robin Jordan served on the fiscal year 2025 Annual Arts Program Grants Task force along with two other task force members from outside the Arts Commission. The Grants Task Force reviewed and provided detailed commentary for 29 applications for fiscal year 2025 grants and held a public meeting where each application was reviewed. The Program awarded a total of \$242,082—an increase of 40% in funding compared to FY2024, which enabled the highest award to be increased from \$10,000 in FY2024 to \$12,500 in FY2025. Twenty-seven applicants received funding, which represents a 23% increase in the number of grantees compared to FY2024. Catherine and Robin met (or will meet) with eight applicants who requested individual feedback sessions.

The Alexandria Office of the Arts provided the data below regarding the FY2024 Annual Arts Program Grants that shows the impact of the Program Grants in our community in FY2024:

Number of grantees:	22
Amount Funded:	\$172,600 (includes the Virginia Commission for the Arts Creative Communities Partnership grant of \$4,500)
Number of Artists Engaged/Hired:	942
Number of Engagements/Occurrences	1042
Number of Programming Hours	11,311
Number of Audience Served/Reached	27,228

City of Alexandria Public Art Task Forces

To support public art in Alexandria, Arts Commissioners served on numerous public arts task forces along with community members and stakeholders. The purpose of the public art task forces is to help set goals for the project, support community engagement, recommend an artist, and review and approve concept designs. In FY2024, Arts Commissioners served on the following task forces:

Del Pepper Community Resource Center Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Brian Kelley, Chris Kurowski

Project Scope: Commission an original work of public art for the main lobby and adjoining wings of the Center.

Current Status: Setting Project Goals & Parameters

Site/See (Public Art at the Waterfront) Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Tiffany Williams and Christina Baucom

Project Scope: Commission new, temporary, site-specific public art for Waterfront Park at the foot of King Street for 2025.

Current Status: Artist Nekisha Durrett has had a tour of the site and met with key staff and community members and will present a concept proposal by September 2024.

South Circle Park/Block 32, Eisenhower Avenue Public Art Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Dawn Rogala

Project Scope: Commission an artist to join the park design team and design public art for South Circle Park.

Current Status: Artist DeWitt Godfrey will continue to work with the design team to complete the final drawings for the park.

Time & Place 275th

Arts Commission Members: Jason Longfellow and Gayle Converse,

Project Scope: Commission public art projects that foster exploration and dialogue about our region's history and its continued reverberations within our community today specifically tied to Alexandria's 27th anniversary in 2024.

Current Status: Artist Dee Dwyer's concept was approved by the Task Force in July.

Torpedo Factory Art Center Loading Dock Door Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Marcee Craighill and Paul Painter

Project Scope: Commission a mural on the new garage door on Union Street at the Torpedo Factory Art Center.

Current Status: The mural was installed in June 2024.

Vision Zero Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Stacey Becker and Hosai Rasuli

Project Scope: Commission a project in the Warwick Village neighborhood that supports the Vision Zero belief that traffic deaths and severe injuries are unacceptable.

Current Status: The Task Force has reviewed and scored applications and a final selection of artist was approved by the Arts Commission at their July 2024 regular meeting.

West End Transitway Public Art Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Brian Kelley and Trena Raines

Project Scope: Work with Alexandria Transportation & Environmental Services to integrate new public art into the West End Transitway stations.
project.

Current Status: The Task Force reviewed applications and selected finalists for the project. The Arts Commission approved the selection of artists Matthew Geller, Cara Lynch, Nany Oneill, Shahin Talishkhan and Robert Tully for the project.

Wilkes Street Park Public Art Task Force

Arts Commission Members: Chris Kurowski and Marcee Craighill

Project Scope: Commission permanent public art for the redesigned park

Current Status: The park will experience further design development which will require additional community engagement and a redesign of the artwork. Staff will work to identify community members to serve on the Task Force.

Alexandria Commission for the Arts Liaisons to Other Commissions and Organizations

Arts Commissioners served as liaisons to two other organizations.

Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Arts Commissioner Marcee Craighill served as the Arts Commission's liaison to the Alexandria Waterfront Commission. She regularly attended the Waterfront Commission's meetings and advocated for arts-related issues and provided detailed reports of the Waterfront Commission's meetings to the Arts Commission.

Alexandria Arts Alliance

Arts Commissioners Gayle Converse and Stacey Becker served as liaisons to the Alexandria Arts Alliance, a nonprofit coalition of arts organizations that works to advance the Arts in Alexandria. The Arts Commission and the Alliance joined forces to march in the 2023 Scottish Walk Parade and the Ballyshaners St. Patrick's Parade. The event showcased the magnitude and important role the arts play in the city, as Alliance member organizations partnered with current and former Arts Commissioners – all wearing holiday themed garb and displaying arts organization banners.

Conclusion

The Arts Commission looks forward to continuing its work to support a vibrant arts community in Alexandria in fiscal year 2025.

Attachments

1. Commission and grantees events/projects photographs FY 2024
2. Notable Letters to City Council
3. Arts Commission Meeting Attendance for FY2024

Attachment 1
Commission and Grantees Photographs FY 2024



Arts Commissioners attend the Old Town North Stormwater Cover Installation Celebration



Arts Commission Chair Brian Kelley at the ALX Film Festival reception with festival directors.



The Alexandria Commission for the Arts joined forces with the Alexandria Arts Alliance to march in the 2023 Scottish Walk.



Arts Commissioners attended their annual holiday gathering at O'Connell's restaurant



Arts Commission First Vice Chair Paul Painter attended the opening of Interstellar Influencer (Make an Impact) at Waterfront Park



Arts Commissioners during their Spring 2024 Commission Retreat



Arts Commissioner Ashley Smith attended the 2024 Festival of Speed and Style in Old Town.



A new mural was unveiled at the Torpedo Factory Arts Center loading door, the result of work by an Alexandria public art task force that included members of the Arts Commission.

Attachment 2
Notable Letters to City Council from the Arts Commission for the Arts for FY2024

Alexandria Commission for the Arts
Brian Kelley, Chair
Alexandria, Virginia

October 22, 2023

RE: FY 2024 Budget Recommendations

Dear City Manager James F. Parajon,

Thank you for reaching out to the Commission for the Arts regarding budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2024. Of the key areas you mentioned in the budget, I might best comment on Multi-Lingual Community Engagement and Our Youth and Families. It is my hope that I can show how these relate to consideration of increasing the budget of the Office of the Arts, the budget item for Program Grants, as well as affordable performance and rehearsal venues.

For Multi-Lingual Community Engagement, such as community engagement opportunities, we should think of past and present program grants recipients in Alexandria, such as QuinTango (which does multi-lingual programming, with members speaking Spanish, English, French, Mandarin, and German), Ethiopian Community Support and Advocacy Center (Amharic, English), foreign film screenings through the Alexandria Film Festival and Ethiopian Film & Art Festival. The arts are a popular and natural way to bring communities together, including those of multiple languages. An increase in funding to the Office of the Arts, particularly to the Program Grants, would allow for further investment in such community engagement.

For Our Youth and Families, we can consider recreational classes and childhood programs. Our Program Grants to recipients like Momentum Collective, Inc., Sound Impact, Young Playwrights Theater, and UpCycle Creative Reuse Center (to name only a few) all include funding for such childhood classes and workshops; programming that can contribute to the health, wellness, and academic success of the child in a way that is proactive and positive. Again, an increase to funding, particularly Program Grants, allows for further growth in this area. Additionally, the Office of the Arts' Mobile Art Lab is another opportunity to hold similar programming in all parts of the city.

Program Grants funding has been flat at around \$170,000 for over a decade. Adjusted for inflation, this funding would be around \$240,000, had it been raised every year. Alexandria has many more qualified arts nonprofits that apply for Program Grants than the city can currently fund, even when the maximum grant is not to exceed \$10,000. On average, many of these arts nonprofits usually budget around \$50,000 for their total program. While our Program Grants are intended to cover as much as half of a total program budget, it is now more common to only cover a fifth. In future years, inflation and flat budgets will make it harder and harder to continue the arts programming Alexandria currently enjoys and benefits from.

Harder to address but worth noting is the lack not just of affordable housing in the city, but also affordable performance and rehearsal spaces for our arts organizations. Venues such as the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, a major private venue that is accessible to mass transit, have been significantly raising their rates. City recreation centers, parks, libraries, and public schools will only become more important venues in future years. Alexandria should consider the inclusion or expansion of performance spaces whenever considering capital improvements to a facility.

The Commission for the Arts greatly appreciates your request for input on the budget and hopes that this letter will be of use. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have future questions or comments.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Kelley
Chair, Commission for the Arts

Attachment 3

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS ATTENDANCE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

COMMISSIONERS:	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV*	DEC*	JAN*	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN		
Scott Abeles	Did Not Meet	Did Not Meet	New Member							A	X	X		
Christina Calloway Baucom			X	AA	AA	X	X	X	X	Term Expired				
Alvah Beander			New Member										X	
Stacey Becker			New Member	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Marcee Craighill			X	X	X	AA	X	X	AA	X	X	AA		
Gayle Converse			X	X	AA	X	X	X	Term Expired					
Catherine Dehoney			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	V	
Allison Heck			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Term Expired				
Robin Jordan			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	AA	
Brian Kelley			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chris Kurowski			X	AA	X	X	X	X	X	AA	AA	X		
Jason Longfellow			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Paul Painter			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Trena Raines			New Member							X	X	X	X	
David Pritzker			X	X	X	X	X	AA	X	X	X	X		
Dawn Rogala			X	X	AA	X	X	X	X	V	X	AA		
Hosai Rasuli			New Member				X	X	X	AA	A	V	A	
Ashley Smith			New Member									X	V	X
Tiffany Williams					X	X	Resigned							

*Special Meeting

X indicates Commissioner is in attendance.
AA indicates an approved absence.
V indicates virtual attendance.