

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2024
VIRTUAL
7 PM

ATTENDANCE: Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin (1 absence); Rachel Brill-Meckler (1 absence); Kendra Green; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Elisabeth “PJ” Palmer Johnson; Kafi Joseph; Matthew Worner; Lexi White; Shelly Brown; Anuja Miner; Jennifer “Jenn” Stowe; Emily Eckert; Jennifer Wetmore; Yvette Jiang, and Nichelle Johnson-Billups

ABSENT: Jennifer Wetmore (1 absence)

STAFF:

Debra Evans
LaTanya Chinagorom

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

None.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair White welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION PACKET

The Commission reviewed the New Member Orientation Packet. Some bullet points were discussed:

- Volunteer hours required for Commissioners should be eight hours per month.
- Commissioners can subscribe to the Google Calendar and have an email list so that the events and calendar is a “living” document where Commissioners can add to the document.
- The virtual policy was changed to make it more flexible.
- For a virtual meeting an eight-person quorum must be met. A Commissioner is able to attend virtually on an as needed basis or due to a health matter.
- Commission virtual meetings cannot be held two consecutive months at a time; can be held virtually every other month.
- Commissioners are required to attend 75% of the meetings per year. Ms. Chinagorom gives the attendance at the end of the Commission year.
- Two excused absences are allowed per year - granted by the Chair or Executive Committee only. An excused absence is defined as a family emergency, personal health matter, travel commitments, etc. A planned vacation is an excused absence but must be communicated and counted towards the two allotted absences.

- A 48-hour notice for absences is preferred unless there are extenuating circumstances or unforeseen emergencies
- Notices should be in writing (not text) to the Executive Board (to Chair White, “cc” Debra Evans, “bcc” the other Executive Board members -First Vice Chair Hutchinson and Second Vice Chair Jiang).
- If there is an announcement that should go out, there should be no more than two Commissioners on the “To” or “cc” line on the email thread. Indicate at the top of the email who is bcc’d. Include Ms. Evans or Ms. Chinagorom as staff liaisons.
- They have functions-based subcommittees: Reproductive Healthcare Rights, Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking and Affordable Housing/Transportation and will make space for other topics to be presented and worked on.
- Commission Liaisons: Commissioner Palmer Johnson (Human Rights); Commissioner Stowe (Aging), and First Vice Chair Hutchinson (HIV/AIDS) and several Commissioners who are City Council Liaisons.
- Added an oath of office to the list.
- It was suggested that Commissioners should indicate that there is not a conflict-of-interest form; but it was found that the Commission for Women does not require this form. However, some other Commissions in the City of Alexandria do require that form.
- Reasons to be removed from office; 60-days to return the oath to the City, but the Commissioner cannot vote unless they have turned in the oath. **Action Item: Commission will check to determine if the requirement for a Commissioner is to live or have property in Alexandria in order to be a member of the Commission.**
- **Action Item: Put a small group to work on the document separately and have people review and go over it at the next meeting. Commissioners Joseph, Witkin and Second Vice Chair Jiang will work on the new orientation packet. Finalize the document at the next meeting and have it completed by the end of the year (2024).**

WELCOME NEW MEMBER NICHELLE JOHNSON-BILLIPS

The Commission welcomed new Commissioner Johnson-Billips aboard. Introductions were made. **Action Item: The Executive Board will meet with Commissioner Johnson-Billips.**

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 2024 MINUTES

Commissioner Stowe moved to approve the September 2024 minutes. All were in favor. Commissioner Witkin abstained because she was not at the September meeting.

DEBRIEF OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION EVENT & NEXT STEPS COMING OUT OF RETREAT

Thank you’s and kudos were extended to everyone who helped make the 50th anniversary a success. The Commission discussed roses and thorns about the reception. Commissioner Stowe proposed that the Commission contribute \$37.10 each for the expenses that she (\$255.33 and Chair White (\$264.00) incurred (total \$519.33). Unused cider and plates were returned to the store and refunded (total does not include this cost). Commissioner Palmer Johnson moved to have Commissioners contribute \$38.00 each, minus new Commissioner Johnson-Billups. Commissioner Stowe seconded. The Commission voted on this per Commissioner Palmer Johnson’s recommendation. All were in favor. **Action Item: Commissioner Stowe will send**

her Venmo information to the staff liaisons and they will send to the full Commission.

A suggestion was made to have future events begin later than 5 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities-** Purple Out Day, October 17.
Individual wear purple and share selfie photos and videos in support of domestic violence survivors. Action Item: Commissioner Worner said he would put photos and general information on the Commissions social media page.
- **Breast Cancer Awareness Month** – Commissioner Palmer Johnson will meet with Senators and Congressmen on Capitol Hill on October 9, to advocate for more money for breast cancer research. *Alexandria Celebrates Women!* is hosting an event for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, October 11, 6:30 p.m. at the Canal Center.
- Commissioner Palmer Johnson and a group will march from the Holiday Inn to the Capitol (200 people) with signs congressperson's office and ask to sponsor the two bills they are advocating for. **Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will send the draft letter to Chair White to send to the Commission for them to use.**
- **Children's Holiday Party-** Save the Date! December 12, 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. is set up. Gifts and gift cards are being received until December 9. Ms. Evans will make arrangements. Commissioners can sponsor families. There will be a Google sheet created for the Commissioners to sign up for the wish list from the family online and in person. Ms. Evans will obtain the wish list from the family. There was a motion to adopt the family, it was seconded, and all were in favor by vote. Ms. Evans and First Vice Chair Hutchinson will provide next steps. First and Second Vice Chairs will provide a wish list of items the family needs. Items will be collected by December 10.
- **January Social Hour/Panel Discussion**

Executive Board and John Thompson, Human Rights Commission Chair, is planning to host a social happy hour. The Commission is considering a venue for the social hour and will find out what direction the event is going to make the decision.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES RECAP

Chair White provided the updates as to what legislative priorities were in each subcommittee's purview.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE CONVERSATION

The new vision on how the Commission can have function-based subcommittees was discussed. The subcommittees are function-based subcommittees. They are tracked on a spreadsheet. The responsibilities have been divided by topic. Second Vice Chair explained the spreadsheet. Chair White shared each function. Commissioner Joseph suggested to create a spreadsheet to show who is responsible/accountable for the subcommittee topics to have a visual. The following

are Action Items for the Commission to fulfill:

- **The subcommittees will hold a full meeting with subcommittee leads to co-create a statement of purpose to define subcommittee with goals. They will draft language of the statement of purpose ahead of time.**
- **Commissioner Joseph will prepare a spreadsheet on lanes and roles of the subcommittees.**
- **Ms. Evans will ask the City Attorney if the next virtual subcommittee meeting will be considered a second virtual meeting (in a row) and will inform the Executive Board.**
- **Ms. Evans will forward the email with the statement of purpose for coordination. Commissioners will review.**
- **The August 2024 Retreat Minutes will be amended to reflect Jennifer Wetmore's excused absence.**

REPORT OUTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES & COMMISSION LIAISONS

- **Affordable Housing & Transportation (*Yvette*)** – None.
- **Survivor Support (*Jennifer W.*)** – None.
- **Reproductive Rights (*Emily*)** – None.
- **Human Rights Commission** – The Rainbow Crosswalk that the Human Rights Commission advocated for. They would like to see the crosswalk in other areas of the City. If any Commissioners would like a crosswalk in their community, send the request to Commissioner Palmer Johnson. They are advocating for a liaison for the Police Review Board. Suggested that the Commission for Women Executive Board consider having a liaison with the Police Review Board.
- **Aging Commission (*Jenn S.*)** – None.
- **HIV Commission (*Nicole*)** – None.
- **Dash (*Yvette*)** - None
- **Commissioner/City Council Engagement** – None.

NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

IMPORTANT DATES / REMINDERS / ANNOUNCEMENTS – SEE ACFW CALENDAR FOR FULL LISTINGS

- October- Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- December- Children's Holiday Party
- January- Social Hour/Panel Discussion and Human Trafficking Awareness Month

UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETING DATES FOR 2024:

- November 12
 - December 10
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