

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

MINUTES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024

4850 MARK CENTER DRIVE

ROOM 1305

7 PM

ATTENDANCE: Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin (1 absence); Kendra Green; Elisabeth “PJ” Palmer Johnson; Kafi Joseph; Lexi White; Emily Eckert; Yvette Jiang, and Nichelle Johnson-Billups

ABSENT: Jennifer “Jenn” Stowe

VIRTUAL:

T. Nicole Hutchinson
Shelly Brown

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 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

PRESENTATION BY DASH – CAMILA OLIVARES, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

- DASH Marketing and updates were provided by Camila Olivares. Since March 2023 DASH has new job descriptions. Ms. Olivares shared key points:
- DASH is ensuring that they have a strong brand that is recognized in the community.
- Working on bimonthly newsletter to share stories to the public and highlights from staff.
- They will host a Holiday Celebration December 2024 with a Winter Trolley to Wonderland. **Action Item: Ms. Olivares will share social media handles, and event information to Second Vice Chair Jiang.**
- Developing partnerships – working with City departments; promoting events and initiatives. They are part of *Visit Alexandria*.
- Equity – Breaking down barriers and ensuring everyone feels welcome.
- Ensuring they provide information to the public and allow the public to provide feedback, ask questions, and be relatable. DASH has provided Free to Ride service since 2021. They are still marketing this effort and broke ridership records. Free fare ends in 2025; DASH will advocate to get City support to stay fare free.

- Ridership has increased, although it can take up to one year to change the system to charge riders again.
- **Question: What have they done to increase awareness or improvement metrics?**

DASH had a large increase in social media presence. Using YouTube shorts, X and Instagram. They plan to gain more social media engagement.

- **Budget priorities:** City Council and the City Manager asked for budget cuts. Have not been able to include some routes. Wants better service and more routes to be 30 minutes instead of 60 minutes.
- The Commission is now followers of DASH on Instagram.
- The Commission would like to see the advocacy that DASH provides. **Action Item: Ms. Oliveras will send information to Commissioner Jiang.**

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2024 MINUTES

The October 2024 minutes were unanimously approved. All were in favor.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION PACKET

Thanks were extended to all who made the new member handbook possible. Details, ordinances and edits were in place. The handbook is 20-pages.

There were no changes or recommendations presented. There are a few legal questions. The packet was sent to the City Attorney's Office for review and approval. **Action Item: All Commissioners were asked to read the document on their own time and send recommendations to the Executive Board.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

▪ **Commissioner Vacancies** – The Commission has four vacancies and one vacant youth advocacy seat (Rachel Brill-Meckler, Matthew Worner, Jennifer Wetmore, and Anuja Miner). The application is on the Boards and Commissions website. The link is also provided in the handbook. **Action Item: Commissioners were asked to speak with their networks.**

▪ **Budget Input Request** - City Council will meet on November 23rd for their annual budget retreat. Their agenda and meeting are made available to the public.

Action Item: The Commission was asked to list top line priorities and general request for budget for the City by Friday, November 15th. They will use priorities as a starting point by Monday, November 18th and will include more funding to support the DV/SA programs.

Action Item: Contact Chair White or Commissioner Eckert about budget topics.

Action Item: Legislative priorities from last year will be shared with Commissioners (Chair White).

With the subcommittee Advocacy & City Council structure – requested more time to get the feedback in. There is an advocacy subcommittee (go to Alexandriava.gov/budget and summary from FY2025 budget.

- **Children's Holiday Party - Save the Date December 12th** Volunteer needs are line leads, decorating, food, arts and crafts tables. **Action Item: Send Ms. Evans an email with the area they would like to volunteer in.** The party begins at 6pm and ends at 8:30 p.m., clean up at 9 p.m. Decorating begins at 1pm. **Action Item: The adopt a family wish list will be provided to the Commission in the next two days upon translation.**

- **January Social Hour/Panel Discussion.** No updates on whether Human Rights Commission can partner in January 2025.

SUBCOMMITTEE STRUCTURE WALKTHROUGH, BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

During the Commission retreat and the October 2024 meeting, the Commission decided to restructure the committee to function-based model instead of issue-based. They began a working group to look at the committee structure to lay the framework. They walked through an example of how the Commission will now collaborate on a project/event. Commissioner Joseph explained the matrix. The Commission will fill out the form for larger events. Smaller events do not require a form. During this meeting they broke out into subcommittee groups to discuss. **Action Item: All subcommittee leads will review the events matrix.**

The Commission added “budgetary changes to” into the Advocacy & City Council Relations purpose statement. The Commission proposed an Event Committee. The Commission needs a lead for the Community and Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee. One of the core responsibilities within this subcommittee includes developing information materials and social media content. **Action Item: The events and coordination subcommittee will meet with Commissioner Green and the Membership Committee will meet with Commissioner Joseph.**

Commissioners Palmer Johnson, Witkin, and Eckert make up the Advocacy subcommittee. **Action Items: Subcommittee leads will clean up tasks and give to other subcommittee group and get their input. The SharePoint access will be updated. Action Item: Commissioner Brown is interested in leading the Community Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee. Action Item: The Commission will identify how many events are feasible for the year and have successful ones recur. Commissioner Joseph will create a pool of volunteers. A volunteer event plan and call list of volunteers will be established.**

The Social Media subcommittee needs to propose an event point person. **Action Item: Schedule time with Commissioner Brown and share passwords for social media sharing. It was suggested that the Commission’s old Facebook page be taken down.** A motion was made to vote to ratify the proposed social committee structure. Commissioner Witkin moved; seconded by Commissioner Joseph.

NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

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

- December- Children’s Holiday Party

- January- Social Hour/Panel Discussion and Human Trafficking Awareness Month

UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETING DATES FOR 2024:

- December 10
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