

# COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

## Meeting Minutes – May 2024

**Date:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 7 pm.

**Location:** City Hall, 301 King Street, Sister Cities Room 1101

**Members present:** Jeff Pool, Alex Sprague, Megan Prince, Rachel Dixon, Kristen Creighton, Anna Forster (Huayra), Lawrence Lewis, Caitlin Fitzsimmons, Robbie Woodson, and Tom Valluzzi.

**Members excused:**

**Members absent:** Justin Beland, Robert Ludke, Michael Kamin.

**City Staff:** Namood Khan

**Guest speakers:** Luis Labra – Deputy Director, Alexandria Library

**Call to Order by Chair Pool:** Chair Pool called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Introductions were made.

**Approval of Agenda:** Commissioner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Kamin, and approved by the Commission body.

**Approval of March Minutes:** Commissioner Kamin made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Woodson, and the April minutes were approved.

**Guest Presentation:** Luis Labra,

**Chair's report:** Chair Pool congratulated everyone for solid outreach resulting in a large volume of ACPD awards applications this year.

Chair Pool shared the following reading recommendation with the Commission:

1. "Sipping Dom Pérignon Through a Straw: Reimagining Success as a Disabled Achiever" by Eddie Ndopu. He authored this memoir with his one good finger and writes about his struggles and challenges despite being talented and accomplished.
2. "Hyperbole and a half", by Allie Brosh.

**Guest Speaker:** Deputy Director of Alexandria Library, Luis Labra, gave a brief overview of the services that libraries offer. Below are some of the key points from his presentation:

- Alexandria Library has a diverse staff, speaking 22 languages. For languages not provided, we use language line and provide sign interpretation of the programs
- Received a 50k supplemental form from the city to beef up a collection of reading material from other foreign language books. We have an equity index tool that helps us scan the quality of the collection. Recent additions are books in Arabic, Urdu, and Ukrainian.

- in the process of hiring Outreach staff
- offer a lot of services:
  - o Citizenship test preparation
  - o ESL classes
  - o Passport application services
  - o Shipped items to the bind
  - o We have a strong audio collection. E-audio books.
  - o We do virtual programs
  - o The library has its own YouTube channel
  - o We just celebrated the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1939 Library Sit-In.
  - o Black Family reunion event planned on September 16.

Possible collaboration ideas with the Commission:

- o “Read Posters” in recognition of Disability Pride Month.
- o Book displays to celebrate the Disability Pride Month.

**ACPD Awards Committee:** Vice Chair Prince and Commissioner Dixon introduced the ACPD applicants. The Commission voted on selecting the final finalists:

- John Duty Collins Award: Dena Penner
- Gerry Bertier Scholarship: Heather Schofield

The commission recommended that the award criteria be reviewed as they are dated. Namoodo shared that this year there was a request for a Spanish version of the applications, hence, the Office of Human Rights will consider preparing

### **Committee reports:**

- **Legislative Committee:** Commissioner Sprague shared legislative updates which were also emailed to the commission.
- **Housing Committee:** Commissioner Creighton shared an update from her meeting regarding Affordable Housing. She shared that she is concerned about the limited affordable housing in new developments in the city and advised Commissioners to keep that in mind when voting for City Council candidates in June.
- **Housing Affordability Committee:** Commissioner Sprague shared that there is a proposal to build a bowling arena at the Potomac Yard.
- **Accessibility-Friendly Businesses Committee:** Commissioner McNulty shared updates from her meeting with Claire Mouledoux, SVP of Communications/Visit Alexandria. The memo was shared with the Commission. There is a plan to meet with Sarah Taylor to discuss collaboration options with the City.

### **Liaison Reports:**

- **Human Rights Commission:** Vice Chair Prince shared a brief update on what was covered in their last meeting. She shared that the HRC will set up a table at the Pride Month Festival and inquired if anyone would be interested in representing the ACPD.
- **AHAAC:** Commissioner Sprague was not present.

**Members report:**

- Commissioner Valluzzi inquired if anyone knew where he could weigh himself while in the wheelchair. Chair Pool advised him to check with INOVA Fairfax.
- Commissioner Creighton shared that ACPS is holding a Transition Fair for kids in the school system. The aim is to provide resources to students with disabilities transitioning from elementary school into high school, or from high school to the working world.
- Commissioner Forster shared that NVCC is hiring an academic success coach for their Steps to College Program.
- Commission Fitzsimmons shared that she is interested in having someone to talk about resources for families with infants and children with developmental disabilities and early intervention. Chair Pool advised her to reach out to him to discuss this further.
- Commissioner Sprague shared that the City issued a proclamation on the Autism Acceptance Day. They encouraged everyone to vote.

Chair Pool proposed that the Commission meet 30 minutes before the awards ceremony to conduct a short meeting in June.

**Adjournment:** Motion: Upon a motion by Vice Chair Prince, seconded by Commissioner Creighton and approved unanimously by the Commission

The meeting concluded at 9:15 pm.