

COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Meeting Minutes – August 2024

Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 7 pm

Location: Via Zoom

Members present: Jeff Pool, Bob Ludke, Megan Prince, Kristen Creighton, Alex Radt, Deanne McNulty, Huayra Forster, Robbi Woodson, Tom Valluzzi, Jacob Griffins.

Members excused: Alex Sprague, Rachel Dixon.

Members absent:

City Staff: Namood Khan

Guest speakers:

Call to Order by Chair Pool: Chair Pool called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of May Minutes: Commissioner Woodson made the motion, seconded by Commissioner McNulty, and the May minutes were approved.

Approval of June Minutes: Commissioner Griffins made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Creighton, and the May minutes were approved.

Guest Presentation: Natalie Tallis and Sean Curry from Alexandria Health Department provided an overview of their upcoming community Health Assessment Initiative. They encouraged the commission to participate in various data collection activities, including surveys, focus groups, and community meetings. Commission members agreed to help promote participation within their networks.

Passing of Dena Penner, 2024 JDCIII award recipient: The Commission discussed the passing of Dan Penner, the honoree for the John Duty Collins award at the last meeting. The group expressed condolences for her family and the impact her loss will have on the community, particularly on initiatives related to special education and the Council of PTAs.

Legislative Committee Discussion: The Commission discussed the need to formalize the assignments for the legislative committee and the Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Council liaison role. This was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting.

Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics: Commissioner Ludke shared that he is a long-time board member of Advocates for Alexandria Aquatics, a community organization working to improve access to Alexandria's aquatic infrastructure. The city's current facilities meet the needs of only 20% of the population, and many children and adults never learn to swim due to historical inequalities. The organization's primary goal was to build a 50-meter pool at Chinguapin Rec Center, but the project didn't advance. As the organization is now winding down, with \$10,000 remaining, they've decided to donate the funds to the local YMCA for swim lessons and scholarships, particularly for people with disabilities. The YMCA, known for accessible programs, would use these funds to help cover lesson costs for those who can't afford them and potentially to provide specialized training for instructors to support individuals with disabilities. The organization aims to ensure these lessons are inclusive and hopes to engage networks to further support this mission.

Commissioner Ludke introduced Nick Dorazio, the director of Alexandria YMCA, who talked about the YMCA and its mission to provide accessible aquatics infrastructure.

Committee reports:

- **Legislative Committee:**
- **Housing Committee:**
- **Housing Affordability Committee:**
- **Accessibility-Friendly Businesses Committee:**
- **Human Rights Commission:** Vice Chair Prince shared that no meeting was held in August.
- **AHAAC:** Commissioner Sprague was not present.

Members report:

- Commissioner Woodson shared that Melwood welcomed more than 700 campers to 8 weeks of camp, which was their largest camp yet.
- Commissioner Radt shared that they went to see the new wheelchair securement system that the Dash bus had on display. They also shared that Beatley Library had Disability Pride book display in July and that it was fun to see the efforts of the commission come to fruition.

Adjournment: Motion: Upon a motion by Commissioner Creighton, seconded by Commissioner Woodson and approved unanimously by the Commission

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2024.