

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2024

7:00 P.M., City Hall
301 King Street, Room 2000
Chet and Sabra Avery Room

Members Present

Kristen Creighton
Rachel Dixon
Caitlin Fitzsimmons
Huayra Forster (participated by conference call)
Lawrence Lewis
Jeff Pool, Chair
Megan Prince, Vice Chair
Alex Radt
Alex Sprague
Bob Ludke
Howard Weiss

City Staff Present

David Miller, Acting Director

Members Excused

Robbi Woodson
Tom Valluzzi
Deanne McNulty

Members Absent

Jacob Griffin

1. **Call to Order/Introductions by Chair Poole**

Chair Pool called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sprague, seconded by Commissioner Prince, the Agenda was approved, with changes. All Commissioners present voted aye.

3. **Approval of Minutes of the September Meeting**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sprague, seconded by Commissioner Lewis, the November minutes were approved, with changes. All Commissioners present voted aye.

4. **Guest speakers**

Rachel M Drescher, Urban Planner III, Department of Planning & Zoning

Ms. Drescher stated that she wanted to reach out to the Commission to get the Commission's input and feedback on A-Frames signs. A-Frame signs are advertisement signs that businesses are placing on the sidewalk to draw attention to the business. Chair Poole asked the City's position and regulation on A-Frame signs currently. The signs, at this time, are not regulated by city Code but are regulated by state and federal accessibility requirements. Ms. Drescher states that there have been concerns about sign placement and businesses maintaining the proper distance to keep the sidewalk clear. Commissioners asked questions regarding A-Frame placement and impeding pedestrian right-of-way on the sidewalks.

Commissioner Lewis stated that if you regulate it, then that is saying to the business that it is approved, and once it is approved everyone may ask for it. The question is, if it doesn't put the business at a disadvantage than what is the harm to the business. Commissioner Weiss asked if there was feedback from the business owners. Ms. Drescher said, yes, the business community wants the signs for advertising. Vice Chair Prince asked if there are any other communities that have regulations. Ms. Drescher said yes and provided examples of what other communities are doing to regulate A-Frame signage. Commissioner Radt stated that there are positives to the signs, there placement and height make it easy for wheelchair users to read the information. Commissioner Ludke spoke about a City-wide review of accessibility. Ms. Drescher addressed possible legal challenges to regulation of the signs. Commissioner Lewis said that once the city regulates the signs, that will signal to other businesses that they can have signs. Commissioner Weiss spoke about the other concerns with accessibility in the city. Commissioners expressed an interest in having Ms. Drescher back later next year to provide an update on this issue.

5. **Chair's Report**

Chair Poole thanked Vice Chair Prince for running October's meeting. Chair Poole asked that commissioners, for the time being, to identify themselves when they make a motion or second a motion so that the information can be captured accurately in the minutes. Please send ideas and information through the Chair, Vice Chair, and David. As a best practice, if you engage the commission in between meetings, copy the Chair, Vice Chair, and David.

Chair Poole stated that the Housing 2024 Master Plan, which has not been update since 2013, is being worked on and there has been a request for the commission's input. There is a website setup and recordings from the Kick-Off meeting ([data, educational webinars and information](#) and [opportunities for input and engagement](#)). Chair Poole mentioned that there are concerns with subsidized housing, affordable housing, for persons with disabilities, and land use. Chair Poole states that, if commissioners would like to provided informed targeted feedback, there is a link to the Housing Survey (research.net/r/AlexandriaVA-Housing2040). Chair Poole states that Tamara Jovovic has come to the commission twice before to provide the commission with information, and so, he knows that she would like the commission's input. Commissioner Creighton mentioned that Ms. Jovovic had sent her an email and provided information about the Goals and Principles of the plan. The commission discussed how best to respond to the Housing Survey. The commission decided to respond as individuals and may respond as a commission. Commissioner Creighton will email Ms. Jovovic to tell her how the commission will respond.

6. **Public Comment**

None

7. **Committee Reports**

- **Executive Committee:** None
- **Legislative Committee:** David updated the commission on the City's acting legislative director, Megahn Roberts, Deputy City Attorney. David stated that Sarah Taylor (The City's former Legislative Director turned consultant) is working with the City on the

legislative initiatives. David will provide Commissioner Sprague with contact information for the City's acting legislative director.

- **Housing Committee:** Commissioner Creighton reiterated participation in the Housing 2024 Master Plan, which was previously discussed.
- **Housing Affordability Committee:** None
- **Accessibility-Friendly Businesses Committee:** None
- **Human Rights Commission:** Commissioner Prince stated that the majority of the HRC meeting was taken up public comment.
- **Architectural Review-** None
- **AHAAC:** Commissioner Dixon discussed the ACPS 2030 Strategic Plan. She explained that the committee has held 2 of the 4 planned meetings. ACPS has partnered with Deliver Ed to help facilitate and manage the update to the 5-year plan. On the committee are 2 Board members, 19 ACPS staff members, 6 parent representatives, 6 Board Advisory members, 6 City and Community members, and 3 students. The committee's draft goals are: Engage and Challenge Every Student, Every Day, Hire and Retain a Diverse, High-Quality Workforce, Build a Culture of Safety and Belonging, Communicate and Connect with Our ACPS Community. Commissioner Dixon states that there is a website to provide feedback ([form.](#)) and information on the ACPS 2023 Strategic Plan ([ACPS 2030 Strategic Plan](#)).

8. **Member Report**

- Commissioner Forester – Acknowledged the struggles for the return of land and spaces for native people and the creation of safe spaces for immigrants. Also, keeping mindful that our struggles may create differences and risks, but that our differences may sustain momentum and support as a human family.
- Commissioner Prince – None
- Commissioner Sprague – Provided update on the special constitutional amendment session, continuation of the push for the Keeping All Students Safe Act, and the Unionization at their workplace.
- Commissioner Radt – Spoke about being active with their university, George Washington University, involved with campus accessibility.
- Commissioner Dixon - None
- Commissioner Fitzsimmons – None
- Commissioner Ludke - None
- Commissioner Lewis- None
- Commissioner Creighton – Family and Community Engagement Center is holding a 1-hour webinar on services available to support the mental health and well-being of students with disabilities.
- Commissioner Weiss - None
- Chair Poole – Read the list of guest speakers for 2025.

Action Item

The Commission will work over the next few months to develop questions before the Alex311 presentation.

David will provide Commissioner Sprague with the contact information for the City Acting Legislative Director.

David will send out a copy of the commission's guest list to all commissioners.

Chair Poole will work on the Commission's Annual Report.

9. **Adjournment**

Commissioner Sprague motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Lewis. All Commissioners present voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2024, which will be an abbreviated meeting and holiday potluck/ Commission's 50th anniversary.