

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING

**Meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2023**

**Del Pepper Community Resource Center, Room 9208**

**Minutes**

**Commissioners Physically Present:** Ana Rivas-Beck, Enid Borden, Alan Dinsmore, Jenn Stowe, Jane King, Lois Steele, Ray Biegun, Jessica Lefevre, Gerri Wallace, Tom Reeder, Secretary, Kathleen Demik, Marshall Hesper, Barbara Huelat, Barbara D'Agostino, Vice Chair, James Bruen, Michael Schuster, Chair.

**Participating by Zoom, with Permission of Chair:** Canek Aguirre, Bill Cambell.

**Excused Absence:** Jim Lindsay.

**Unexcused absences:** Joy Kone, David Kaplan.

**Members of the Public Present:** Robert Eiffert, Housing Committee, Bertha Wallace, Vicki Rutson.

**City Staff Present:** Ashley Johnson and Pamela Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services.

**Members of the Public Participating by Zoom:** Juanita Balenger

The meeting was called to order at 4:05

At 4:08, the proposed agenda was unanimously approved, with the change of moving the special presentation to the first item of business.

At 4:09, the draft minutes of the meeting of October 12, 2023, were unanimously approved. There was no Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report.

Jessica Fredericksen, Director of Brain Health at Goodwin Living gave a special presentation to the Commission on "Brain Health." The Stronger Memory Program focuses on three activities for 20-30 minutes a day to activate the prefrontal cortex: reading aloud, doing simple math quickly, and writing by hand. The program has been shown to promote stronger memory. Details and a downloadable workbook are available at [goodwinhouse.org/stronger-memory](http://goodwinhouse.org/stronger-memory). A hard copy of the workbook is also available. The program partners with George Mason University, which is currently studying the program. Groups exist in Maryland and Virginia.

The commissioners discussed the Ladrey Redevelopment Plan which includes a development plan, affordable housing plan, and relocation plan. Present for the discussion were Chris Jones of Winn Companies, one of the developers, Scott Adams attorney for Winn Companies, and Thomas Jones, of the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA). Also available on the phone were Steve Mikulic, attorney for the developers; Aimee McHale of Winn Companies; Eric Keeler and Kim Cadena, Alexandria Office of Housing; Gaynelle Diaz and Wanda Sherrod, ARHA; Hannagh Jacobsen, Housing to Home. The commissioners expressed concern about several aspects of the relocation, including who will be responsible for oversight, the effect of that relocation of older residents, why the definition of older residents was over 55, timing of relocation, how the community that exists at Ladrey will be maintained during the relocation, the frequency of communications with residents, and the continuation of housing vouchers after the redevelopment is complete.

The commissioners discussed the draft Age Friendly Final Report. Commissioner Jane King reviewed the history of the Age Friendly Plan, the structure of the current program, and the organization of the final report. The report is organized by the seven domains, with input from the five committees of the Commission. In short, Commissioner King reported that the City of Alexandria accomplished everything it said it would do in the past Age Friendly Plan. The next step is for the Commission to review and approve the final report, then it will be presented to City Council for approval, and then to AARP. Once approved by AARP, the Commission and City staff will work on the next Age friendly plan.

Chair Schuster reported on the Arlington-Alexandria Joint Legislative Forum on November 14, 2023 at 9:30 on Zoom. Senators and Delegates representing Alexandria will be participating.

Pamela Austin announced the publication in October of the new Resource Directory published by the Division of Aging and Adult Services.

Tom Reeder reported that the Human Rights Commission discussed the Zoning for Housing proposal now before the Council and that Council would have two more public hearings on the issue (November 14 and 18) before voting on it on November 28. The rainbow crosswalk proposed by the Human Rights Commission has been approved for King Street in front of City Hall and should be completed early next year.

Juanita Balenger reported on the numerous activities of the St. Martins de Porres Senior Center, including a visit by the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Michael Burbidge, to help celebrate the Feast of St. Francis on October 4 and the intergenerational events sponsored by the Society for Human Resources Management and Bishop Ireton High School students as well as an upcoming event involving students from Bishop O'Connell Catholic High School.

Jenn Stowe reported that the Commission for Women participated in the Silent Witness Candlelight Vigil on October 12 to honor and remember those who have died or are suffering from domestic violence. The Commission for Women also sponsored a webinar on affordable housing on October 18.

Marshall Hespe announced the monthly program of Senior Services of Alexandria on Wednesday, November 15 at 9:30 at the Beatley Library. The topic of this month's discussion is "Discover Fun Things to See and Do in Alexandria." He also indicated the availability of cards to use when accompanying individuals with dementia at a restaurant or other public place.

Lois Steele discussed the joint meeting of the Housing Committee with the Executive Committee on October 30 that included an extensive discussion of the Ladrey redevelopment and relocation. She also indicated that the Housing Committee is considering a separate committee or subcommittee focusing on long term care facilities.

The next meeting of the Outreach Committee will be held at Goodwin House on November 16, at 11:30.

Jessica Lefevre announced that the Economic Security Committee will be focusing on SNAP and food security, employment activities and anti-aging.

Michael Schuster announced and Barbara Huelat discussed her recently released book, "Taming the Chaos of Dementia: A Caregiver's Guide to Interventions that Make a Difference." The Health and Dementia Friendly Committee will meet on the third Thursday of each month and will be focusing on initiatives and possible presentations from those in the eye and oral health arena.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 pm.

The next meeting of the Commission will be on December 14, at 4 pm at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center and the next Executive Committee Meeting will be on Monday, December 4 at 1:00 pm at Goodwin House.

Notes written by Thomas Reeder, Secretary of the Commission on Aging