

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING
Meeting: Thursday, December 14, 2023

Del Pepper Community Resource Center, Room 9208

Draft Minutes

This meeting was held virtually, and a recording was made.

Commissioners Participating by Videoconference: Tom Reeder, Jane King, Michael Schuster, Jeanette Shepherd, Lois Steele, Jim Bruen, Enid Borden, Barbara Huelat, Barbara D'Agostino, Alan Dinsmore, Jeanette Shepherd, Ray Biegun, Kathleen DeMik, Canek Aguirre, Jen Stowe, Marshall Hespe, Jim Lindsay, David Kaplan, Gerri Wallace. Ana Rivas-Beck, Enid Borden, Alan Dinsmore, Jenn Stowe, Kathleen DeMik, Joy Kone.

Excused Absence: Jessica LeFevre

Unexcused absences: William Campbell

Liaisons Participating by Videoconference: Juanita Balenger, St. Martins Senior Center; Darrell Wesley, Adult Cay Service Center; Ian Torrance, Police Department; Pamela Guerra, Senior Center at Charles Houston; Jan Macidull, Housing Affordability Advisory Committee; Bob Eiffert, At Home Alexandria.

Members of the Public Participating by Videoconference: Cedar Dvorin, Mary Lee Anderson, Marcie Campbell (PACE), Bertha Wallace, Vicki Rutson, Gaynelle Diaz (ARHA)

City Staff Participating by Videoconference: Ashley Johnson and Pamela Austin, Maya Thomas Chris Moore, Division of Aging and Adult Services.

The meeting was called to order at 4:03

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

At 4:09, the draft minutes of the meeting of November 9, 2023, were unanimously approved.

As part of the Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report Sgt. Torrance reminded everyone to report all scams and indicated an existing issue regarding Amazon, so people should change their Amazon passwords.

Reporting for the City staff, Ashley Johnson indicated the addition of three new staff members in new staff members in the Aging and Adult Services Division.

The letter to the City Council regarding the proposed City Budget was discussed and approved unanimously.

There was a discussion of the formation of a Long-Term Care Services working group.

Marcie Campbell, VP Cherry Blossom PACE, presented details of her organization to the Commission. Cherry Blossom PACE is an all-inclusive care for older people in Alexandria, Arlington,

and parts of Fairfax County in their home. The organization operates as both a provider and insurer. The services are for people who would otherwise move to institutional living. The facility is on N. Beauregard and provides care for 34 participants; 55 or older who are deemed clinically eligible for a nursing facility, resident of PACE service area, and can be and willing to be cared for in a community setting. The services are funded through Medicare and Medicaid. If a participant is over the Medicaid threshold, there is a small copay.

A draft of Chairman Schuster's testimony regarding legislative program was discussed and approved unanimously.

Chris Moore reviewed the Age Friendly final report for the Commission. It was very favorably received by members of the Commission and, subject to needs minor edits, was approved unanimously to be sent to City Council for its approval, then to AARP for final approval.

Chris Moore reported that there is a new state Division for Aging Services under a new Deputy Commissioner within the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, which he viewed as a positive development for attention to aging services at the state level.

Tom Reeder reported that the City Council approved a declaration of December as Human Rights Month in Alexandria, in connection with National Human Rights Month.

Bob Eiffert reported that At Home Alexandria was busy with end-of-year fundraising.

Jane King indicated that people should connect with her if they are interested in connecting with AARP state activities.

Juanita Balenger reported on activities at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center, including flu and COVID shots administered by the City Health Department, Bishop O'Connell and Bishop Ireton intergenerational groups, Dia de los Muertos activities, the farmers market voucher program, arts and crafts activities, and the announcement of the inclement weather policy. The Center will be closed December 22-26 and December 29.

Pam Guerra reported on the Charles Houston Senior Center holiday events.

A new Commission liaison is needed for the Commission on Employment

Marshall Hespe reported that Senior Services of Alexandria had new staffers, including an Amharic speaker and an additional Spanish speaker. He indicated that SSA would be sponsoring a program on Empowering Caregivers on Wednesday, January 17 at the Beatley Library, providing strategies and resources for older adult caregivers. The Regional Older Adults Facility Team (RAFT) and others will participate.

Darrell Wesley reported on the activities at the Adult Day Services Center.

Jan Macidull reported that the Housing Affordability Advisory Committee would continue to pursue ongoing oversight through all phases of the Ladrey redevelopment proposal, which the Committee voted to approve. She indicated that those responsible for the transition have been listening and are incorporating some of the Committees suggested changes.

Lois Steele, reporting for the Housing Committee, also indicated that the Committee's is continuing to monitor the Ladrey transition. She indicated that Goodwin Living, on its own, accepted two residents who are recipients of auxiliary grants and that it is considering rent subsidy, that would initially be

funded by the facility. A new independent living facility (Alate) is opening in North Old Town. A “summit” meeting is planned for all age-friendly communities in the DC area in September of 2024 and housing will be a major focus. The Housing Committee will be meeting at 1:00 on Monday, December 18, at Beatley Library.

Marshall Hespe reported that a work group has been formed in the Outreach Committee and that the Committee would be meeting Friday, December 15 on Zoom, that will include Dawn Higgins and a discussion of the mindfulness project that she had originally proposed for the Committee.

Alan Dinsmore indicated that the Transportation Committee would be meeting on December 20 at 4:00 at Charles Houston Recreation Center to discuss the effects on transportation of the proposed redevelopment at Potomac Yard.

Barbara Huelat indicated that the Health Committee would meet on Thursday, December 21 at 4:00.

David Kaplan announced that the DASH Board is seeking two new members and the deadline for applications is December 29.

Chris Moore announced that Kim Taylor would be leaving DCHS, effective December 15, 2023.

Bob Eiffert reminded everyone of the importance of getting an RSV vaccine.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 pm.

The next meeting of the Commission will be on January 11, 2024, at 4 pm at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center at 4850 Mark Center Drive

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be announced.