

ALEXANDRIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024  
7:00 p.m., City Hall  
301 King Street, Room 1101  
The Chet and Sabra Avery Room

Members Present

Marc Bendick, Vice Chair  
April Breslaw  
Iulia Fratila  
Matt Harris  
Manisha Maniyar  
Elisabeth "PJ" Palmer Johnson, Vice Chair  
Megan Prince  
Tom Reeder, Jr.  
David Rigsby  
Scott Schwartz  
Jon Thompson, Chair

Staff Present

Anna McClure, Investigator/Acting Director  
Miladis Martinez Gutierrez, Adm. Support

Members Un-excused

Lisl Brunner

Members Excused

Conrad Sylvanus

Guests

Darryllyn Franklin, Community Policing Review Board  
Natalie Talis, Alexandria Health Department  
Monika Jones Chapman

**1. Call to Order/Introductions by Chair Jon Thompson**

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

**2. Approval of Minutes of the July Meeting**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Breslaw, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the minutes of the July meeting were approved. All Commissioners present voted aye.

**3. Guest- Natalie Talis, Alexandria Health Department**

Ms. Talis, Population Health Manager for the Alexandria Health Department, talked about the 2024 Community Health Assessment (CHA) survey and how the Commission could be involved. Her team conducts community engagement and outreach and has bilingual community health workers. AHD's data analysis team works to identify major health issues in Alexandria. AHD also works directly with impacted populations to identify and craft solutions.

She said that, when talking about and looking at health in Alexandria, AHD looks at different factors, because people's health is impacted by a lot of different factors, such as socioeconomic, physical environment, health behavior, and healthcare.

Every five years AHD does a CHA. Health systems, such as INOVA, are legally required to do so every three years, but AHD is in a five-year cycle to better align with the five-year cycles for the ACPS strategic plan and the DCHS Children and Youth Community Plan. The CHA helps AHD identify community health strengths, issues, and inequities, using quantitative and qualitative data. The result is a list of the top health issues in the community, which guides the development of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Ms. Talis reported that AHD is in the middle of a five-year CHIP and will use the results from the new CHA to develop a new CHIP to address the issues identified. In 2018-2019, AHD conducted a community-wide survey and heard from 19,000 people; they held community meetings to review the survey results, look at the data, and get feedback from the community.

Ms. Talis stated that, for the last CHA, AHD partnered with INOVA, to share data. This led to a better understanding of health equity in our community, an actionable plan (CHIP) to improve community-selected health factors (poverty, mental health, and housing), and real programs and policies that improve health, such as Healthy Homes, out-of-school activities, and free transit. She reported that residents generated every tactic and strategy in that five-year, of which there were more than 80. There are lead organizations for those tactics.

The current CHA survey is live, and Ms. Talis will provide a link to share with the Commission. AHD's goal is to get more than 2,000 responses, and the survey is open until November 1. AHD is going to rec centers, libraries, restaurants, faith services, and boards and commissions, as well as walking in the community, to get people to respond to the survey. There is a kick-off event, on October 1, at Patrick Henry Recreation Center. After results are in, there will be a lot of data analysis, trying to break the data down as much as possible identify whether there are differences in outcomes based on geography, race, ethnicity, gender, income, and age. The report on the findings of the CHA will be released in June 2025.

She reported that, while developing the last CHIP, residents said they wanted closer access to health care in different areas. This issue was brought to Planning & Zoning, which proposed a zoning change to allow healthcare uses in residential spaces. The change was passed by Council.

#### **4. Darrlynn Franklin, Community Policing Review Board**

Chair Thompson welcomed Ms. Franklin and said the Commission would like to hear about the Community Policing Review Board (CPRB) - why was it created, what do they do, and whether there are ways that the Commission might be able to assist the CPRB in the future. Ms. Franklin said that, on June 9, 2020, City Council unanimously adopted resolution 2950, condemning police brutality and systemic racism, reaffirming that Black lives matter, and stating Council's intent to establish a community policing review board. The resolution directed the City Manager and City Attorney to return to City Council at the first legislative meeting with a proposed ordinance to establish a community policing review board. City Council developed a draft ordinance, after considering examples of review boards throughout the country. At the Council meeting, on January 12, 2021, the community asked questions about and provided comments on ordinance. In April 2021, Council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance establishing an independent policing review board, effective July 1, 2021, and authorizing Council to establish an Office of the Independent Policing Auditor.

Ms. Franklin explained that the purpose of CPRB is to enhance policing and legitimacy, and to increase and maintain trust between and among the APD, Council, the City Manager, and the public. CPRB provides timely, fair, and objective reviews of administrative investigations conducted by the Auditor and APD. CPRB makes recommendations intended to remedy discriminatory practices, including racial and social inequities, ensures the protection of all

communities through recommended actions and reform, including in the criminal justice system, and recommends strategies for effectively implementing these reforms in our community.

Ms. Franklin said CPRB has eight members and is currently working on updating the ordinance, to be presented to Council this fall. CPRB has provided APD with an MOU, and once in place, CPRB will start investigating. She said they have taken trainings, including a whole day of training at APD. CPRB members are required to do three four-hour ride along each year.

Chair Thompson introduced Monika Jones Chapman and said she was very influential in passing the ordinance. Chair Thompson asked her what was envisioned for CPRB. Ms. Jones Chapman said that, when the Commission's executive committee met with APD internal investigators, they received reports on various cases, engaged directly with the internal investigation team, inquired about possible trends, made recommendations on trainings for APD, and addressed concerns from the community about potential biased policing. Ms. Jones Chapman said their scope and access to information on cases was limited. The reports were redacted significantly, and commissioners were not able to keep them. The Commission was not able to be as deliberate in making recommendations because of limited access to information. This led her to be influential in talking with the previous City Manager on the necessity of establishing a review board.

Commissioner Harris asked if the ordinance says there must be an MOU with APD, and whether it can be changed? Ms. Franklin said the ordinance requires an MOU. APD has to understand why the CPRB was established and agree to what the CPRB, as an independent body, will do. Ms. Franklin said MOU is in process and that, a year ago, they provided a draft to then Police Chief Hayes. She said they just finished making proposed changes to the ordinance. Members of the board, the Auditor, and members of APD came together and met every week for eight weeks about what they wanted to change and what they wanted to keep in the MOU and the ordinance.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if the CPRB can carry out the actual police oversight function. Ms. Franklin said the Auditor does and does not need an MOU. Ms. Franklin said that, when the board receives a complaint, it goes to the Auditor, who reviews, makes recommendations, and presents to the board for review and approval. It goes back to APD to decide if they will act. Under the ordinance, once a recommendation is made, there will be a public hearing.

Commissioner Schwartz asked if the Commission could do anything to press the City Manager, APD, and Council to move more expeditiously. Ms. Franklin suggested having a conversation with them. She said APD has not given a reason why the MOU has not been approved; she thinks the primary reason is that they thought the ordinance may have been overreaching. Council decided to modify the ordinance, which CPRB just finished doing. Her understanding is that the MOU and the ordinance will be delivered this fall.

Ms. Jones Chapman asked if APD has committed to providing their version of the MOU to the CPRB for consideration, before it goes to Council. Ms. Franklin said the MOU goes from APD to the City Manager, then the Auditor, and then CPRB. Ms. Jones Chapman asked if the MOU is between APD and the Auditor or CPRB. Ms. Franklin said it is between both. Ms. Jones Chapman asked if all three are signatories, why does it need to go through the Auditor first? Ms. Franklin explained that APD and the Auditor work for Council, and CPRB is independent, and

they report to Council; the Auditor and CPRB do not report to each other. Ms. Jones Chapman said she does not want CPRB to minimize their role; if the MOU is between all three, each should have equal say in what that MOU says and the expected time for delivering it. Ms. Jones Chapman recommended that the Commission have a conversation with CPRB to see if there is a way to encourage Council to set an expected time for the delivery; they had a year to review and eight weeks to negotiate the ordinance, during which they could have negotiated the MOU.

Chair Thompson mentioned the recent APD shooting and asked if any complaints have reached CPRB. He asked what CPRB has done since the shooting, and what procedures they will follow after the review by outside agencies is done. Ms. Franklin explained that some complaints have been filed and have gone to the Auditor; she will review them and make recommendations, but she has not presented any cases to CPRB because they are still waiting on the MOU.

Ms. Franklin asked the Commission to send a list of questions to her to forward to the Auditor and Rob Krupicka, so they can answer them. She recommended a liaison from the Commission to the CPRB and vice versa. She recommended they meet quarterly, which is how often they meet with the Police Chief. She recommended that, when the Police Chief comes to CPRB, the Commission have representation. Ms. Franklin will recommend, as a change to the ordinance, that a member of one of the other commissions sit on CPRB and include a youth member.

Vice Chair Bendick asked if the Board needed to put forward any recommendations based on what they have learned about APD. Ms. Franklin reported that they have recommended including race when collecting data on the number of arrests City and when they make stops.

Ms. Franklin the Auditor asked her to set up a listening session for the community, on December 7. The Auditor is going to have a number of these sessions. Ms. Franklin recommended attending those meetings to talk to the Auditor.

Chair Thompson asked commissioners to submit questions for CPRB to Ms. McClure to compile and send to Ms. Franklin, Rob Krupicka, and Ms. Neal. He said a member of the Executive Committee will attend the next CPRB meeting. Ms. Franklin recommended reading the ordinance, so that they understand the roles and responsibilities, and information on the MOU.

Chair Thompson said that he would like for the Commission to have a discussion of their thought at the next meeting especially if they get their questions answered about what they want to do. Maybe drafting a letter to the City Council expressing some concerns or highlighting some of the things they would like to see on the revised ordinance.

## **5. Executive Committee Meeting**

Chair Thompson said Kevin Harris from ARHA will come to the October meeting. He said he heard from a non-profit, "Homes not Borders," which helps refugees secure housing, and is hoping they can come to the November meeting. He asked for the Commission's assistance to invite other organizations that work with immigrant and refugee families in the City.

Chair Thompson gave an update on the legislative proposals and said that there is an expungement law that is not yet in effect. He said Acting Director McClure had added the

noncompete clause ban that Commissioner Harris had proposed. Commissioner Schwartz said that he proposed language to oppose any cuts in funding for the health department and to support any increase in funding for health care and requested that the HIV/AIDS Commission be added to the list of Commissions. Upon a motion by Commissioner Schwartz, seconded by Commissioner Prince the Legislative Package was approved with proposed changes.

Chair Thompson gave an update on the rainbow crosswalk and said there has been a request to add two more; one in Del Ray and one in the West End. He said one suggestion is to solicit letters of support from the community. He would like to get something to Council by January.

#### **6. Old/New Business**

Chair Thompson said the draft letter inviting the ACPS Superintendent and ACHS Principal has been circulated, and he asked for comments letter. Acting Director McClure suggested inviting them to another meeting because there is a guest for October. Chair Thompson suggested inviting them to the Executive Committee Meeting in October. Upon a motion by Commissioner Prince, seconded by Commissioner Harris the invitation letter will be amended to change the invitation date to the October 7 Executive Committee meeting. The following changes will also be made: “the HRC is requesting your participation,” instead of “would welcome your participation;” remove the word “curious” and replace it with “we are interested.”

#### **7. Liaison Reports**

Vice Chair Palmer Johnson reported that the Commission for Women also heard from Natalis Talis community health assessment. She announced that, on September 24, the Commission for Women will be having their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

Commissioner Reeder reported that the Commission on Aging would hear from ARHA next month. They adopted their legislative package, which included six proposals.

Commissioner Prince reported that the ACPD had a presentation from DASH. DASH brought a bus with a new auto-secure wheelchair system installed. It has been installed in one DASH bus five buses planned, and eventually the whole fleet.

Acting Director McClure informed the Commission that Investigator Namood Khan, who used to staff the ACPD, has taken a job in Fairfax County, so the office is short-staffed.

#### **8. Public Comment**

Jonathan Krall, with Grassroots Alexandria, asked for the Commission to recommend, in their legislative package, the defunding and dismantling of the Virginia Israel Advisory Board.

#### **9. Announcements /Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Harris/Vice Chair Palmer Johnson **PASSED** unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.