

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

December 9, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Babs Waters, Victoria Almquist, Mary Lee Anderson, Ray Biegun, William Campbell, Marjorie Conner, Barbara D'Agostino, Lynette Foster, Dawn Higgins, David Kaplan, Michael Kreps; Jim Lindsay, Ellen Nelson, Del Pepper, Michael Schuster, Lois Steele, Gerri Wallace

Members Excused: Jenn Stowe

Members Unexcused: Barbara Huelat, Michael Kamin

Liaisons Present: Pamela Guerra, Senior Center @ Charles Houston; Margaret Orlando, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities; Ian Torrance, Police Department; Darrell Wesley, Adult Day Services Center

Staff Members Present: Terri Lynch, Debbie Ludington, Kim Taylor, Lucia Park and Pamela Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services; Evelyn Quiles, Workforce Dev. Center

Guests Present: Jane King, COA Housing Committee; Canek Aquirre, Anthem Health Care / City Council; Gaynelle Diaz, ARHA; Geoffrey Caldwell, Econ. Opportunities Commission; Nicolas Joseph, PACE; Pat Killeen, PHAC; Cathy Cole, Fairfax Commission on Aging; Blanca Cali, Virginia Hospital Center; Bob Eiffert, COA Housing Committee; Jan Macidull, COA Housing Committee

1. **Call to Order.** Ms. Waters called the December meeting of the Commission on Aging ("COA") to order at 4:00 PM.
2. **Approval of Agenda.** The agenda for the meeting was approved unanimously.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** The November minutes were approved unanimously.
4. **Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report.** Ms. Waters introduced Sgt. Ian Torrance, who joined the COA meeting on behalf of the Alexandria City Police Department. Marjorie Connor asked about the bomb threats at Minnie Howard, asked why residents nearby are not given timely notification of such dangers. Sgt. Torrance said that information about such events is relayed to the public within minutes through special alerts you can sign up for. He also said you can sign into their Facebook pages for additional crime-related information at: <https://m.facebook.com/AlexandriaVAPD/>.
5. **Executive Committee Report.** Materials previously distributed.

6. **Special Presentation: Del Pepper.** Chair Babs Waters asked Councilwoman Del Pepper to say a few words since she will be leaving the Alexandria City Council and the Commission on Aging in January 2022. Del Pepper thanked Ms. Waters for her introduction. Del Pepper recalled how in 1985 she felt the urge to get involved in Alexandria issues and decided to run for City Council, not expecting to win. Not only did she win in 1985 but has been the longest-serving member of the Council – 36 years as a Councilor and three times as its Vice Mayor. She has served under 6 mayors and 5 city managers. She said there is no better public forum to air community issues than the City Council.

Del Pepper listed many City accomplishments she is proud to have been involved in. She mentioned the relocation of the Patent and Trade Office to Alexandria and the closure of the 50-acre Mirant Potomac River Power Plant that burned polluting coal. She and others went to Richmond to get the authority to have it closed. In its place will be a development of housing overlooking the Potomac River. She also spoke about the Landmark Mall development, another 50 acres that will be made into a new hospital for Inova Alexandria, doctors' offices, and affordable housing. Another accomplishment of which she is proud is the new metro station at Potomac Yard, which is set to open in fall 2022. She told her skeptics who believed it would not be used very much that "if you build it, people will come." She also talked about the waterfront development that she hopes will encourage "passive use" and encourage residents to come to enjoy the natural surroundings. He mentioned less ostensible projects, but not less important issues on which she worked. In 1994, she pushed for the City to become more computerized to allow residents to access city services online. She supported the city's Senior Employment Program and advocated for the creation of a full-time employment specialist for the Workforce Development Center (WDC). Finally, she was instrumental in the establishment of a property tax relief program for residents who are "house poor" without sufficient income to pay real estate taxes.

After Del Pepper's presentation, Chair Waters added closing remarks thanking her for her service on the Commission since 1992. She noted Del's laudatory work outside the City Council with the local NAACP, Urban League, YMCA, and the Council of Governments. Others echoed the Chair's comments. Mary Lee Anderson related how she, Bob Eiffert, and Jane King went to a City Council meeting to advocate for a property tax relief program and were persuaded by Councilmember Pepper to stay until the end of the meeting to ensure the Council did not change its mind on the proposal before the end of the session. A lesson in advocacy she thanked councilor Pepper for. Ms. Waters added that "when she speaks, we listen – she is the real deal."

After all the remarks, the Commission presented Del with a commemorative plaque, and a photo showing the designation in her honor of the Conference Room – Room 407 at the Department of Aging and Adult Services, as "Pepper Place."

7. **Discussion and Action Items**

- a. Thank you to COA members leaving. Chair Waters thanked the members whose terms were expiring: Marjorie Connor, Victoria Almquist, and Asfaha Beyene.
- b. COVID-19 vaccinations updates – booster shots: Victoria Almquist. Victoria said that the new transmission numbers are discouraging. Alexandria and most of Virginia are now in the “high” category. The latest report says there have been 15,410 cases and a positivity rate that has increased from 3% to 4.8% in Alexandria. The vaccination rates are: for partly vaccinated adults, 85.3%; for fully vaccinated adults, 75.9%; and for those getting a booster, 22.8%. The unvaccinated rate is 22%. Victoria said you can get up-to-date information from the Department of Health’s Dashboard: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/performance/info/dashboard.aspx?id=114883>
- c. Outreach Committee needs a new chair. Chair Waters said that with both Victoria and Asfaha leaving the Commission, the current co-chairs for the Outreach Committee, there is a need to replace them.
- d. Debbie’s retirement party – December 15th at the Lee Center. Commissioners wishing to attend Debbie’s retirement party should RSVP as soon as possible.

8. **Liaison Reports.**

- a. *Division of Aging and Adult Services.* Terri Lynch said that she will be at the January COA meeting even if her successor has been hired to smooth through the transition. She gave an update on the new agency budget approvals. The Grand Pad program will be funded through September 30, 2024, in partnership with Senior Services of Alexandria. There is also one-time funding for St. Martin de Porres to upgrade their kitchen and bathroom facilities, and money to improve the senior bus services for shopping and other appointments. Terri reported that the PACE program will open in January 2022. Bob Eiffert explained that PACE is an acronym for Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly. It provides a full medical model of health, wellness care, and personal care for older adults who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. Participants receive all their medical and physical care from the program. Cherry Blossom PACE will be providing a range of health-related services for older adults at its new facility on Beauregard Street: Cherry Blossom PACE. Bob is working on scheduling a tour of their new facility before the end of the year. He said this represents decades of work to establish such a service in the area.

The Commission recognized Terri for her many years of dedicated service by acknowledging all the qualities she demonstrated throughout her service in Alexandria: **T-E-R-R-I**: T for being tireless and terrific; E for endless dedication and energetic engagement; R for resourcefulness, “running the race” and reliability; I for interest and irrepressible enthusiasm. **L-Y-N-C-H**: L for love of older adults and laughter; Y for yes to coming to work here, and years of devoted service; N for no-nonsense, and doing nothing but the best; C for commitment and calming competence; and H for humor and humanity.

- b. *Commission for Women.*

- c. *AHA*. Bob Eiffert said they are engaged in a year-end funding drive and will probably go back to virtual programs and meetings.
- d. *AARP*.
- e. *NVAN*. Terri Lynch said NVAN will be meeting on the second Tuesday of the month, with the next meeting in January.
- f. *Senior Center at Charles Houston*. Pam Guerra is the new coordinator at the center, replacing Vanessa Green. Pam starts on January 13, 2022. See Attached.
- g. *Arlington Legislative Committee*. Michael Schuster reported that they met last week to confirm which delegates and senators will sponsor legislation on NVAN's platform.
- h. *Community Health Assessment*.
- i. *St. Martins Senior Center*. Materials previously distributed.
- j. *Virginia Hospital Center*. Blanca Cali is the new liaison but had nothing to report at this time.
- k. *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria*.
- l. *Public Health Advisory Commission*.
- m. *Commission on Persons with Disabilities*.
- n. *Senior Services of Alexandria*. Mary Lee Anderson said they will be continuing with virtual programming. They are planning for their March Gala in two different modes: in-person and virtual, depending on which is feasible at the time. Materials previously distributed.
- o. *Alexandria Commission on Employment*.
- p. *Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance*. Mary Lee Anderson said they are doing master training.
- q. *Arlington Commission on Aging*.
- r. *Successful Aging*. Margaret Orlando said they are meeting again in person but will not have an in-person holiday program this year.
- s. *Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities*. Margaret Orlando said they are having winter classes now. Next week, registration starts for Spring and Summer in-person classes. See Attached PDF.

- t. *Alexandria Adult Day Services Center.* Darrell Wesley said they are still in the process of hiring for three staff positions.
- u. *Housing Affordability Advisory Committee.* Jan Macidull is still waiting for the confirmation of her appointment by the City Council to be a member of the Committee.
- v. *INOVA Alexandria Hospital.*
- w. *Human Rights Commission.* See Attached.

9. **Committee Updates.**

- a. *Housing.* Materials previously distributed.
- b. *Outreach.* Victoria Almquist mentioned the difficulty of doing outreach to the faith community. Mary Lee Anderson offered to put something in their newsletter.
- c. *Transportation.* Materials previously distributed.
- d. *Economic Development.* Materials previously distributed.
- e. *Strategic Planning.*
- f. *Health/Dementia Friendly.* See Attached.
- g. *Advocacy*

10. **Other Business.** Evelyn Quilles from the Workforce Development Center said they are looking for people who can provide help in their work-based experience program, focusing on IT, procurement, administrative work, finance, and health care. They can pay between \$15 and \$20 an hour, up to 35 hours a week for three months. The objective is to provide participants exposure to actual work done in these areas.

11. **Meeting Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

Minutes will be presented at the January 13, 2022 COA meeting for approval.

Minutes prepared by Michael Schuster, COA Secretary.

SC@CH NOVEMBER 2021 MONTHLY REPORT FOR DAAS

1. WEEKLY CONTACT OF PARTICIPANTS:

286 DUPLICATED/38 UNDUPLICATED CONTACTS made during “Wellness Check” Tuesdays. Inquired of any pressing needs or concerns; asked of interest in weekly Thursday shopping and allowed participants an opportunity to talk about feelings and emotions they may be experiencing (ex. isolation, depression, COVID Booster Vaccine, loss, etc.).

2. COORDINATION/SUPERVISION OF WEEKLY GROCERY/PHARMACY TRIPS:

85 DUPLICATED UNITS OF SERVICE/20 PERSONS SERVED on weekly shopping trips. Staff ensure that participants are socially distant in their seating, wearing masks, gloves as needed, as well as disinfecting wipes for cleaning grocery cart handles. Staff also assist in locating items participants can't find.

3. COORDINATE PICK UP & DELIVERY OF NON-PERISHABLE, SHELF STABLE FOOD ITEMS AS WELL AS HOUSEHOLD AND PHARMACY ITEMS:

Weekly, staff continue to pick-up household, pharmacy, and shelf stable food items as needed, for participants who are unable to physically shop for themselves or are “leery” in venturing out.

4. WEEKLY VIRTUAL ZOOM & TELECONFERENCE ACTIVITIES:

56 DUPLICATED PERSONS participated in the Wednesday teleconference calls and Zoom meetings. Virtual activities including Bingo and cognitive/brain teaser activities (Scavenger hunt, geography, General & TV Trivia, word search and rebus puzzles) continue. We have revised our Wednesday and weekly schedule to include virtual wellness/informative presentations such as cooking demonstrations and wellness presentations.

5. COMPLETE REQUIRED PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENTS:

No required participant assessments due.

Two new participants added to roster and short forms completed and sent in.

6. PARTICIPATE IN APPROPRIATE WEBINARS/ON-LINE TRAINING:

Center staff participated in the following webinars/training:

11-8-2021: Meeting and Site Visit with Amanda Gamble from Alexandria Health Department

11-9-2021: Virtual Meeting with Morgan McAlpin (Alexandria Health Dept) and her outreach team

7. "GOODY BAGS":

No goodie bags distributed this month.

8. COMMUNICATION WITH PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPORT THE SENIORS AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES:

Communication/teleconference in collaboration with my west-end counterpart, as well as ADSC staff sharing ideas and planning virtual activities. Also receive and give resource information to the respective program participants. Continue to be in constant contact with Charles Houston Recreation staff regarding building operation hours, overall building cleaning, coordinating senior center staff days/hours with building operation and receiving latest updates of any internal concerns.

Other meetings include the following:

Our Monday Walking Club @ Belle Haven Park remains in full swing with a total of **11 walkers** for the month of November, as well as our Arthritis Exercise class, twice a month via Zoom with a total of **12** participants.

**ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS – EMAILS, PHONE CALLS, REQUIRED
CONFERENCE CALLS AND WEEKLY MEETINGS:**

Daily reviewing emails and voice messages, responding to inquiries.
Participate in weekly ARHA RACS staff teleconference meetings and other meetings as required.

Minutes From the Human Rights Commission Meeting on November 16, 2021

We began with a summary of the Executive Committee Meeting at which time they decided to look further into the VA Dept of Criminal Justice Services (Bias Testing). We will have a presentation either in February or March on the new Statewide pre-trial risk assessment software.

Contributory Negligence. We are advocating for a change in the current legislation. There are only 4 states that support the current legislation and VA is one of them. Insurance companies will be obligated to pay for an accident say if someone on a bike gets hit by a car and was not wearing a helmet. The current argument is that the plaintiff failed to exercise reasonable care for their safety and the insurance companies won't pay for the claim. This disproportionately affects persons with inadequate health care. In the City, with more people on scooters and bikes, it gives them added coverage. The HR Commission was hoping that another Commission would submit a legislative proposal.

Invited Guests:

1. Acting Chief APD Don Hayes-February-2022
2. Sarah Taylor-Post election chat and Community Policing Review Board-December 2021

Alexandria's Community Remembrance Project- we will have a PPT presentation at our December meeting.

Rainbow Crosswalk has been deferred until there is an opportunity to discuss with the new City Council members.

Report
Health and Dementia Friendly Committee
Commission on Aging
City of Alexandria, Virginia
Meeting December 9, 2021

The Health and Dementia Friendly Committee has not met recently.

Committee members: Barbara D'Agastino, Jackie Barbarito, Barbara Huelat, Jane King, Jenn Stowe, Marjorie Conner

- **Dementia Friendly Community**

Dementia Champions training noted as October 18. Ms. Huelat and Ms. Conner attended.

DF Training **this Saturday** 1030-1145 AM: https://leadingagevirginia.org/mpage/DFVA_FindSession

The City's Age Friendly Plan will expire in 2021. The HDF and COA must evaluate our performance and develop a new 3-year plan,

Jane King and Jackie Barbarito are leading the efforts with members of the Committee and the CoA, as a whole, and City Department of Aging and other agencies, as appropriate.

Marjorie Conner is working to bring the City's CHIP to the effort, so that any commonalities between the CHIP and the new age friendly plan can be identified and worked.

- **Sen. Mark Warner talk on his family's experience with dementia**

Ms. Conner will follow up with Mr. Warner's office after receiving word from Ms. Barbarito on Leading Age's interest in participating and calendar limitations.

- **Efforts to lower barriers to adoption of telehealth**

The EBB will phase out to \$30 month continuous support. The pandemic CMS rules that fostered telehealth are under consideration for permanent adoption.

Jane King may have reported separately on the great work she and Jackie Barbarito accomplished on our Age Friendly plan. Here is her report to me:

The Age Friendly Plan goals have to be completed by Dec. 31. They have been completed for Community and Health Services

1. The Division of Aging and Adult Services hired a Mental Health Case Manager and a Mental Health Therapist as called for in the Age Friendly Plan. Terri reported that the City Council provided budget for these positions (at least in part) because they were goals of the Plan.

2. The Dementia Friendly goals in the Plan have been far exceeded, in part because Jackie Barbarito saw our Plan and decided that Goodwin House should play a major role in achieving the Plan's goals. With the Commission and Goodwin House working together, the dementia friendly work has proceeded at an impressive pace. The dementia friendly trainings have resumed and recently sheriffs and police departments have been trained for a second time.

3. Senior Seniors held a session on emergency preparedness for the senior ambassadors. This supported the emergency preparedness goal as has some public education.