

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Alexandria Beautification Commission
P.O. Box 178
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 9, 2019
7:30 PM
Durant Arts Center
1605 Cameron Street

Attendees: Kathryn Chiasson (Chair), Mary Enschede (Secretary), Mellenie Runion, Denise Tennant (Vice Chair), Geoff Montross, Eleanor Quigley, Christina Mazurkevich, Cathleen Curtin, Joseph Crowell, Donald Kent

Excused Absences:

Unexcused Absences: Kevin Dunne, Richard Dorrier, Monica Murphy

City Staff: Oscar Mendoza

Community Member: None

The meeting was called to order at 7:31pm

- 1) **Approval of March 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes** – A motion to approve the revised minutes was made by Ms. Tennant and seconded by Ms. Mellenie Runion. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes.
- 2) **Membership Updates** - None
- 4) **Commission Business** -
 - A) **Sign the new bylaws and document** – Members present signed.
 - B) **Subcommittee Updates**
 - i) **Awards:**
 - (1) Nominations are due Memorial Day. Fill out the form on the website and upload your pics of the property.

- (2) Voting Tour is scheduled for Sat. June 1st at 7am. Someone from the City will drive the commission members around to look at all the properties nominated and then members will vote on their phone.
- (3) Highest scoring properties will be voted on during the commission meeting.
- (4) Attending the Voting Tour: Mary Enschede, Eleanor Quigley, Christina Mazurkevich, Donald Kent, Kathryn Chiasson, Monica Murphy, Denise Tennant, and Joseph Crowell.
- (5) Need someone to go with Ms. Runion on the photo tour.

Action item: Ms. Chiasson will email a list of properties that are not eligible or currently on the market for sale. Any property in the last 5 years or any Commission member's property, and email the survey monkey form with the digital copy of the list.

Action item: Ms. Tennant will send out examples of descriptions of each category to use as guidance.

ii) **Outreach:**

- (1) Mr. Crowell discussed the Beautification Commission's involvement with other commissions, specifically the Environmental and Policy Commission. A question was raised about whether the commission could/should be part of the environmental and policy space of the City and discuss if this is within the Commission's domain.
- (2) Ms. Quigley is attending the meeting as an interested resident and board member of notice. Ms. Quigley has discovered different definitions of open space in Old Town. Ms. Quigley will attend the meeting on the 20th. Ms. Curtin will reach out to get more information and attend with Ms. Quigley.
- (3) Environmental Action Plan 2040: This is a subject that gets a lot of attention. The plan is a prelude to the work that will be happening on the 20th and anything from the sessions will feed into the work. The City Council will be looking at revisions of the environmental action plan at their meeting in June.
- (4) Ms. Quigley announced that there will be a public meeting next Thursday night on the 16th in Old Town. It will be a panel discussion on the waterfront. They will have professionals with the following backgrounds attending: planning, environmental and history. **Alexandria house 7-9pm Thursday 16th. 400 Madison St. on the 3rd. floor.**
- (5) Mr. Mendoza shared that Kirstin Conrad is ready to support the Commission. She is the extension agent for education programs in coordination of the extension office. This is free resource to use for our programs and initiatives.
 - (a) The Commission could possibly conduct 5 or 6 programs a year. Kristin or another master Gardner could give a presentation (e.g. how to plant a garden in an urban area or planting for winter). Attendance varied widely. They were held at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center in Del Ray.
- (6) Ms. Tennant share that the Commission should use Facebook more for outreach.
- (7) Ms. Runion is requesting everyone to post one post a month.
- (8) A special thanks was given to Ms. Runion for posting pictures of awards from last year and other beautiful houses on Instagram.

iii) **Sustainable Landscaping:**

- (1) Mr. Mendoza - survey division will conduct surveying of the median that is at the Quaker gateway sign by I-395. A portion of that median is in Arlington and the other portion is in Alexandria. The surveyor is asking if we have an agreement with Arlington. Surveyors want to double check with Arlington.
- (2) Following up when the new trees will be planted.

iv) **Vacant Lots:**

- (1) Ms. Tennant share that there is still \$3,300 left to raise. The subcommittee had a quick meeting with Mr. Mendoza about questions and ongoing maintenance costs.
- (2) The subcommittee also applied for a grant and the \$1,000 grant proposal was approved.
- (3) Next goal is to have a new vacant lot.
- (4) The new park is at E. Bellefonte Ave and Richmond Hwy. Ms. Chiasson will post on social media.
- (5) Ms. Chiasson asked for guidance re new properties. How do we figure out if it is City owned? Ms. Tennant responded by sharing that sometimes it can be private at first but then it becomes City property. Please pass on any vacant lot to the subcommittee and they will take look at it. Also note that it doesn't just have to be landscape improvement.
- (6) Ms. Mazurkevich asked who maintains it after we beautify the lot? Answer: multiple people. But for example, the Del Ray Citizens Associations wants to adopt it.
- (7) Mr. Mendoza shared that the entire idea is to create a transition; we beautify then we find a sponsor to help fill the gap.

Action item: Ms. Chiasson will post on social media re the new park at E. Bellefonte Ave and Richmond Hwy.

Summary of Action items:

Action item 1: Ms. Chiasson will post on social media re the new park at E. Bellefonte Ave and Richmond Hwy.

Action item 2: Ms. Chiasson will email a list of properties that are not eligible or currently on the market for sale. Any property in the last 5 years or any Commission member's property, and email the survey monkey form with the digital copy of the list.

Action item 3: Ms. Tennant will send out examples of descriptions of each category to use as guidance.

5) **New Commission Business-** None

6) **Staff Report** – The staff report was electrically circulated. The City is actively getting ready to have the outdoor pool ready.

Alexandria Beautification Commission
Minutes from the May 9, 2019 Meeting

- a) Mr. Crowell inquired about the status of the Urban Forestry Master Plan. Mr. Mendoza remarked that the goal is to have it completed at the end of the fiscal year but most likely early next fiscal year.

7) Agenda Items for Thursday, June 13, 2019

- a) Find speaker from the Transportation and Environmental Services to talk about compost and recycling; Tess will check for new speaker.
- b) An update from the meeting discussed during the Outreach subcommittee update.

8) Public Comment/ Discussion – None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26