

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

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 10, 2019

7:30 PM

Charles Houston Recreation Center
901 Wythe Street

Attendees: Kathryn Chiasson (Chair), Emily Freeland, Richard Dorrier, Mary Enschede, Mellenie Runion, Denise Tennant (Vice Chair), Geoff Montross, Christina Mazurkevich

Excused Absences: Kevin Dunne, Eleanor Quigley

Unexcused Absences: Cathleen Curtin, Joseph Crowell, Monica Murphy, Don Kent

City Staff: Oscar Mendoza

The meeting was called to order at 7:56 PM.

1. **Approval of September 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the updated minutes was made by Mr. Montross and seconded by Ms. Tennant. The Commission unanimously approved the minutes.
2. **Membership Updates:** Today is Ms. Curtin's and Mr. Crowell's last day on the commission. Ms. Curtin has been on the commission for 12 years and was the Chair for a portion of that time. We have general interest in getting more members. Applications for the current session are due On Oct. 15th.
3. **Commission Business:**
 - a. **Elections Next Month -** The positions for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are open. Please chat if you have questions about any of the roles. It's a very good education experience and is a great opportunity to learn more about the Commission.
 - b. **Subcommittee Updates, As Needed**
 - i. **Awards:**
 - (a) Awards will take place Wednesday, October 16th. Please be there by 6:30pm. The Awards start at 7:30pm; please bring your name tags. If you have any questions about the jobs each of us will do at the Awards ceremony, please let Ms. Tennant know. If you are sick or cannot attend, please email Ms. Chiasson or Ms. Tennant to adjust accordingly.

(b) Please bring a medium size yellow or white mum then you can take it home with you. There will be quick remarks by Ms. Chiasson and the Mayor. Joan Honeyman will be the guest speaker. It should last about an hour.

(c) Business casual attire. The subcommittee will be there earlier in the day to help set up.

ii. **Outreach:**

(a) Ms. Tennant shared that the subcommittee is working on a one-page letter to discuss priorities and goals. The document will explain the Commission's goals, background, and objectives. It's a work in progress. The October meeting will be postponed until November because it falls on the Awards ceremony.

iii. **Sustainable Landscaping:**

(a) Ms. Murphy met with Mr. Mendoza to rejuvenate the planters at Market Square. The City will be planting next week. There is also a new medium near the Roark Village. The subcommittee is also going to look at replacing trees at Quaker Lane. With the City's help, the subcommittee plans to get the installation this fall. The subcommittee is making progress. Next meeting will be in November.

(b) Ms. Chiasson mentioned that around the Braddock Metro, there is some landscaping opportunity and could use some trees since it's a high visibility area. The City is redoing the bus stop but isn't incorporating too many plants. On Van Dorn Street, there is a big medium stretch with the "Welcome to Alexandria" that needs more plants.

(c) Mr. Dorrier inquired about the plan on Kings Street and discussed the idea of having someone speak to the Commission about the plans. Mr. Dorrier shared that there is a chain-link fence around the construction zone and wanted to know once everything is complete, if there be room for planting. The Commission continued with an open discussion about the space. Will there be any vegetation, or will it be bare? How much money has been allocated for this project and how much has been spent? There are also stormwater issues that need to be addressed. The Commission can do a lot to that area.

iv. **Vacant Lots:**

(a) The subcommittee has been funded but fell short to accomplish such goals but were able to get funding from the Citizens Association. The contractor came out and they are planning to start in two weeks. The City person will be on site to make sure the contractors follow the plan. The subcommittee has decided to get input on the big neglected area that needs beautification near the west end. The subcommittee is rescheduling the meeting for **Monday, November the 18th at 7pm and external guests will be invited** (Arts Commission, Parks Department Urban Planner, and Sheriff Dana Lawhorne).

4. **New Commission Business:** None

5. **Staff Report:** Mr. Mendoza shared that next week will commence the 3rd phase of the budget for next fiscal year 2021. Cycle of budget starts end of Oct. The City manager will

have a section to discuss proposals. If anyone has any questions, please contact Mr. Mendoza. There is a possibility of having someone come to the next meeting to talk about the budget.

6. Agenda Items for Thursday, November 14th, 2019

- a. Awards debrief
- b. Holiday Party

7. Public Comment/ Discussion - None

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.