

City of Alexandria Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2023, 7:00 PM ET

Attendees:

1. Aminata Ly
2. Tim Laderach
3. Meronne Teklu, Chair
4. Kameron Gonzalez
5. Karishma Merchant
6. David Parker
7. Lesa Gilbert, Staff
8. Alison Coleman, Staff
9. Janeka Cogdell

Absences:

1. Berole Bekele
2. Jenn Ayers
3. Barbara LaToison
4. Charles Brown
5. Conrad Sylvanus
6. L'Allegro Smith

Meronne Teklu, EOC Chair, commenced general discussion without quorum at 7:10 PM ET.

Chair's Opening Remarks

- Welcome to new commissioner David Parker
- Farewell to Kameron Gonzalez

City Updates

- **OCS updates/DCHS updates - Alison & Lesa**
 - Shelters Operating at capacity
 - Current a waitlist
 - Medicaid Unwinding
 - City is dealing with constantly changing policies from the state
 - e.g. contacting recipients who have moved
 - Vacancy for Race & Social Equity Officer
 - [Racial Equity Toolkit](#) created by outgoing staff available on website
 - Two new initiatives in DCHS
 - Utilize race and social equity tools to advance initiatives related to homelessness
 - Legislative advocacy: exploring city's role in advocating for housing stabilization within the city
 - RFP for Alexandria Community & Winter Shelters issued, closing July 7.
 - Childcare funds for Boards & Commissions: Lesa to ask City Clerk to answer

- 1. Which boards & commissions are able to access those funds?; and
- 2. If boards & commissions can use those funds for sponsored community events?

Meronne Teklu, EOC Chair, commenced the meeting at 7:40 PM ET.

Old Business

- **EOC Nominating Update:**
 - Moving forward with Councilman Aguirre's category 1 appointment, Babak
 - Category 3 for vacancy created by Kameron's departure
 - Currently have resumes previously submitted to review
 - Meronne to share with commissioners for action in September
- **Special Events Update:**
 - Meronne shared details regarding the proposed State of the Community event
 - Small team met to discuss scope and topic areas
 - Event focused on highlighting community needs, issues, and resources; bringing in SMEs, and residents to share stories about impact of community services
 - Timing to be an evening in October (post 6PM) to be prior to submission of legislative agenda to enable incorporation of priorities from event
 - Thought is to not lose the narrative of the challenges the community has faced throughout the pandemic
 - Karishma proposed bringing in voices of justice-impacted residents (e.g. Together We Bake)
 - Janeka proposed holding a clothing drive at the event
 - Janeka also raised the question about what the action item is for this event; mentioned that the city has many events but not a lot of clear action. Suggested bringing in partners that could speak to the resident voices that have already been shared.
 - Suggested diversity of panelists beyond Alexandria scope
 - Karishma suggested this to be a clear level setting session for the state of the community as titled, with follow on sessions in subject areas
 - Janeka suggested involving Alexandria Living Legends for their community expertise
 - Lesa asked about a panel of residents with lived experience vs. experts; transforms from individual presentations to a conversation amongst residents.
 - Karishma followed on this thought sharing that she recently moderated a similar panel which generated policy proposals by asking residents questions such as "What do you see as possible solutions to X problem?"
- **Needs Assessment Update:**
 - Meronne shared an update on additions to the Needs Assessment, to include data pulled from the MWCOG regional fair housing plan.

- The strategy for the needs assessment this cycle was changed to include breakout sections of topics previously lumped together.
- Report follows a common format for each category
- Commissioners proposed possible additions to various sections in real time.
- Meronne asked what the actionable takeaways are for the needs assessment
 - Karishma proposed pay equity
- Report tabled for adoption at next meeting; commissioners to review, provide feedback, city staff to provide feedback on various sections.
- **Alexandria Fund for Human Services Update:**
 - Lesa said that the process for selecting grantees was recently completed.
 - Plan to go to council in July to present selections.
- **Alexandria Human Rights Commission Update:**
 - Pursuing rainbow crosswalk, council directed city staff to investigate possible incorporation within the next year.

Procedural

- Meronne reviewed the agenda, Tim moved to approve the agenda and Aminata seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the agenda.
- Aminata reviewed the May minutes, Kameron moved to approve the minutes and seconded. The Commission unanimously approved the May minutes.

New Business

- **EOC Onboarding Packet:**
 - First draft presented to commissioners.
 - Hope is for this to be a living document that will be continuously updated as needed.
 - Commissioners to review and provide feedback.
- **Duke Street in Motion Letter**
 - Council vote next week to review
 - Meronne moved that the EOC send a letter of support of this project.
 - Meronne moved to adopt the letter, Karishma seconded. The commission unanimously voted to adopt the letter as the official position of the EOC.
- **Fall 2023 Meeting Speakers**

Announcements

- No announcements shared.

Closing: Meronne moved to adjourn the meeting, Tim seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM ET.