

**City of Alexandria  
City Council Legislative Meeting  
Tuesday, May 26, 2020 7:00 PM  
Virtual Meeting  
Meeting Minutes**

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Present:: Mayor Justin M. Wilson, Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Members of Council Canek Aguirre, John Taylor Chapman, Amy B. Jackson, Redella S. Pepper, and Mohamed E. Seifeldein.

Absent:: None.

Also Present:: Mr. Jinks, City Manager; Ms. Anderson, City Attorney; Ms. Triggs, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Collins, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Baker, Deputy City Manager; Dr. Haering, Director, Health Department; Ms. Horowitz, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning; Mr. Moritz, Director, Planning and Zoning; Mr. Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; Ms. Garvey, Director, Department of Community and Human Services; Ms. Talis, Health Department; Ms. North, Division Chief, Transportation and Environmental Services; Ms. McIlvaine, Director, Office of Housing; Mr. Keeler, Deputy Director, Office of Housing; Ms. Taylor, Legislative Director; Mr. Fifer, Director, Office of Communications and Public Information; Mr. Moss, Information Technology Services; and Mr. Barre, Information Technology Services.

Recorded By: Gloria Sitton, City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

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1. Calling the Roll.

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order and the City Clerk called the roll. All the members of Council were present via video conference.

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Mayor Wilson stated that the May 26, 2020 Legislative Meeting of the City Council was being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on April 18, 2020 and/or Section 4-0.00(g) in HB29 and HB30 to undertake essential business. All members of the City Council and staff are participating from remote locations through a video conference call on Zoom. The meeting can be accessed by the public through the live broadcast on the government channel 70, streaming on the City's website, and can be accessed via Zoom.

**ORAL REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL ON BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES (COVID-19 Related Topics)**

**\*Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)(Mayor Wilson)**

Mayor Wilson reported that there was a change in the General Assembly membership representative on the Authority, with Delegate Donna Harone and Delegate Vivian Watts being designated to serve on the Authority. Mayor Wilson reported that there virtual public hearing for the Draft Six-Year FY2020-2025 program and board discussed the uncertainty of the revenue streams due to the pandemic emergency. Mayor Wilson noted that there was \$400 million in funding available and the number and cost of the requests received far exceed the funding availability.

**\*City/Schools Subcommittee (Mayor Wilson and Councilman Chapman)**

Councilman Chapman reported on next steps for ACPS for summer programming and planning for fall semester as they continue to address school needs during the pandemic. Dr. Muzingo, Alexandria City Public Schools, gave Council a brief report on the plans for the schools and responded to questions from Council about plans and resources for the students. Councilman Chapman reported that the Patrick Henry planning/Capital Improvement Program is still on track. Mayor Wilson reported that Dr. Hutchings reviewed the range of options for school reopening during the pandemic with the subcommittee.

**\*Virginia Railway Express (VRE) (Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker)**

Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that the VRE held a virtual meeting on May 15 and she noted that VRE has been operating on a reduced schedule because of the pandemic and the ridership was down 95% for the month of April. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that system has received money from the CARES Act to help with the significant loss of revenue because of the pandemic. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that board authorized a contract for design station improvement for the Alexandria station.

**\*Visit Alexandria Board of Governors (Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker)**

Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that Visit Alexandria launched the “ALX At Home” website that began on March 16, with many ways support local businesses and has received numerous hits from press and marketing impressions. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parked noted that Visit Alexandria has been conducting membership surveys on COVID related business impacts and industry research on consumer sentiments as related to travel to work on recovery plan for travel in the area. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that Visit Alexandria has been working with the Health Department on the ALX Promise program for businesses to adopt safety standards for employees and customers. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that Alexandria was named one of the South’s best cities for 2020 by Southern Living Magazine and Alexandria was featured on the Editor’s Favorite Cities for Departures Magazine.

**\*Citizen Corps Council (Councilwoman Jackson and Councilman Seifeldein)**

Councilman Seifeldein reported that the Council worked on the Resiliency Charter, reaching out to stakeholders for input and received updates regarding food distribution and how nonprofit organizations are helping out during the pandemic.

**\*Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources (COG) (Councilwoman Jackson)**

Councilwoman Jackson reported that the committee discussed in great detail the Agricultural Task Force and there was a review of food distribution and needs for the regional and how resources were being distributed during this pandemic. Councilwoman Jackson reported that there were presentations from University of Maryland students on agriculture, urban agriculture and smart growth policies.

**\*MacArthur Design Advisory Committee (Councilwoman Jackson)**

Councilwoman Jackson reported that collaboration committee with Patrick Henry and MacArthur met for the first half of the meeting and the Design Advisory Committee met for the second half of the meeting. Councilwoman Jackson reported that the design advisory committee has requested additional design schematics for the proposed MacArthur building. Councilwoman Jackson noted that the project is moving forward as planned. Councilwoman Jackson reported that there will be after care and before care for the students that attend school at Patrick Henry and there was a discussion about buses for the students. Councilwoman Jackson also responded to questions from Councilman Chapman about the proposed cost for the MacArthur School project.

**\*Alexandria Works! Coalition (Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker and Councilwoman Pepper)**

Councilwoman Pepper reported that the coalition met virtually on May 19 and discussed the workforce development center held a virtual job fair/hiring event with 45 employers who participated. Councilwoman Pepper noted that there were 665 applicants for the available positions. Councilwoman Pepper reported that the Virginia Department of Health is recruiting 1300 contact tracers and the workforce development center is working to ensure that Alexandria residents are aware of these upcoming employment opportunities. Councilwoman Pepper reported that the center would be having the summer youth employment opportunities this year to youth 14 to 21 years old and the staff is working on alternative ways for the program participants to work during the pandemic.

**ORAL REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER**

None.

**REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER FOR DISCUSSION**

**2. COVID-19 Oral Update**

- (1) Dr. Stephen Haering, Director, Alexandria Health Department
- (2) Mark Jinks, City Manager
- (3) James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities
- (4) Karl Moritz, Director, Planning and Zoning

Mayor Wilson noted that the City conducted almost 3000 COVID-19 tests at two sites over the Memorial Day weekend and he highlighted the partnerships between City and State agencies, nonprofits, and others, led by the Alexandria Health Department, to help this be a

successful event.

Dr. Haering, Director, Alexandria Health Department, gave an update to Council on the data and statistics for the COVID-19 cases in the City of Alexandria, including the number of cases, deaths and racial/ethnic breakdown of cases. Dr. Haering also noted that the Health Department is preparing for the reopening of Northern Virginia with the Governor's allowing the beginning of Phase 1.

Ms. Talis, Health Department, updated Council the major initiatives launched by the Health Department in response to COVID-19, including ALX Promise, the community testing effort, and the ongoing community outreach work. Ms. Talis stated that the Health Department working with Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP), Visit Alexandria, and numerous business and restaurant associations throughout the community, launched the program to help train businesses how safely reopen for staff and customers. Ms. Talis gave an updated on the community testing event that was held on Saturday in the Chirilagua neighborhood conducted by Neighborhood Health and she noted that the Health Department provided coordination, logistics, and communication support for the event. Ms. Talis noted that there were 238 people tested at the event and the Health Department has contacted all those with results and connected them with Neighborhood Health. Ms. Talis also discussed the testing events at Landmark Mall and Cora Kelly and how this opportunity gave access to those without traditional health care access and there were 2980 people tested in total. Ms. Talis stated that department undertook promotional efforts in the community to get the word out about the events and get the information to those who could benefit from service. Ms. Talis also stated that there were billboard trucks and yard signs to spread the message and the participants were provided with a packet of information on safety precautions and assistance programs available to the community. Ms. Talis also reported that the Health Department has been participating with ARHA staff and residents town hall web events. Ms. Talis noted that they are participating in the Equity Advisory group and other groups and providing support and information on the pandemic response for the community.

Dr. Haering and Ms. Talis responded to questions from Council about the response and other resources available to the community to address the pandemic crisis.

Mr. Jinks, City Manager, gave City Council an overview of governmental operations during the pandemic. Mr. Jinks noted that the City operations have been accessible to the community the entire time and the organization will begin to focus on phased reopening of government, focusing on standards for personal protective equipment, space standards for employees, and reviewing the use of alternate shifts for employees and continued use of telework and video conferencing. Mr. Jinks noted that the Governor addressed the use of face coverings for government facilities and the City will be exploring whether to implement additional requirements for those entering City buildings.

Mr. Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA), stated that there has been a published plan for reopening recreation facilities for the City. Mr. Spengler noted that the specific challenges for reopening were likely to come from reopening swimming pools and daycare/summer camps. Mr. Spengler noted that there were a diminished number of sites and less students available for service and the staff was working the DCHS to determine if there were need-based services needed. Mr. Spengler stated that swimming pools in neighboring jurisdictions will not be opening and he pointed out that if City pools are opened,

there will be limited days and hours for operating and there will be some type of timed ticketed entry to give everyone a chance to use the pools. Mr. Spengler responded to questions from Council about availability of school facilities, scaling summer camp programs for use by residents returning to work, and the reopening of playgrounds. Mr. Spengler also responded to adequate equipment for employees who would be returning to work in the recreational facilities.

Mr. Moritz, Director, Planning and Zoning, and Ms. Landrum, President/CEO, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP), gave a presentation on the plan for businesses and public spaces reopening. Mr. Moritz noted that there was a request Old Town Business and local business to close the entire 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic and to allow for proper social distancing and outdoor dining in the area. Mr. Moritz gave an overview of the proposed program for outdoor dining and the temporary program was announced last week and the applications will be reviewed quickly to allow restaurants to open. Mr. Moritz stated that there has been a series of webinar to explain the requirements for businesses to reopen. Mr. Moritz responded to questions from Council about safety vehicular access, spacing for the dining seating and social distancing. Ms. Landrum gave an overview of the business grants available to community businesses and the process for applying for the grants. Ms. Landrum responded to question from Council about the grant program and the criteria for applying.

Mr. Fifer, Director, Office of Communications and Public Information, responded to questions from Councilman Aguirre, about the communication of information about the pandemic and the response to the pandemic. Mr. Fifer reviewed the strategies used by OCPI to distribute information to the community through collaboration with community and regional partners. Mr. Fifer also gave an update of the videos for information on COVID-19, participation and information from the Equity Advisory group, and the implementation of a text line for information distribution. Councilman Aguirre requested a memo on the feasibility of implementing a language access unit in the City.

3. Review and Confirmation of the Suspension of Enforcement of Certain City Codes and Ordinances Taken by the City Manager Pursuant to the City's Continuity of Government Ordinance to Allow Restaurants to Have Outdoor Dining in Compliance with the Governor's Executive Orders Easing the Restrictions on Businesses.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated May 20, 2020, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 3; 05/26/20, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

**WHEREUPON**, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Chapman and carried unanimously, City Council confirmed that the suspension of enforcement of the codes and ordinances required to allow flexibility for outdoor dining as described in the attached document shall remain in place for ninety (90) days from the date that the City enters into Phase 1, unless the City Manager determines the suspension should be lifted for any reason before that time. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

4. City Council, Board and Commission Meetings Format During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated May 20, 2020, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 05/26/20, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

**WHEREUPON**, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Chapman and carried unanimously, City Council: (1) hold its June 9 Legislative Meeting and June 20 Public Hearing meeting in an electronic format with a widening of docket subject matters to be considered; (2) determine at a later date in June in what form to hold Council's June 23 Legislative Meeting and July 7 Public Hearing meeting; and (3) provide continued guidance to City Boards and Commissions that they not meet until September 2020 unless considering COVID-19 matters or matters that relate to the continuity of government. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

#### **COVID-19 RELATED ORAL REPORTS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL**

1. Councilman Aguirre requested information on the implementation of the hand washing stations for the City. Mr. Jinks stated that the stations have been ordered and staff is working on plan for appropriate placement of the stations.

2. Councilman Aguirre requested that staff investigate best practices used by communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis to share with Council and the community.

#### **OTHER**

5. Consideration of City Council Schedule.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated May 20, 2020, and is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Exhibit No. 1 of Item No. 5; 05/26/20, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

**WHEREUPON**, upon motion Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Chapman and carried unanimously, City Council: (1) received and adopted the updated City Council Schedule for May 2020 through July 2020; and (2) received and adopted the FY2021 City Council Schedule for August 2020 through July 2021. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

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**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED**, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Aguirre and carried unanimously, City Council adjourned the legislative meeting of May 26, 2020 at 10:39 p.m. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

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**APPROVED BY:**

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**JUSTIN M. WILSON      MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**

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**Gloria A. Sitton, CMC      City Clerk**

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