



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Adoption of the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

ISSUE: Adoption of the *Arts and Culture Master Plan*.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive the *Arts and Culture Master Plan* (Attachment 1) and schedule it for public hearing and adoption on Saturday, December 17, 2016.

BACKGROUND: Beginning in Fall, 2015, the City of Alexandria Office of the Arts undertook the development of a city-wide plan for arts and culture as recommended in the Public Art Implementation Plan that was approved by City Council in December, 2014. The members of the Alexandria Commission for the Arts and the Arts and Culture Plan Steering Committee participated in the development of the plan recommendations.

The *Arts and Culture Master Plan* embodies the belief that creativity is essential to the core of the city, and the recognition that being a vibrant “arts city” is a deeply held value and seeks to balance the unique history, institutions and values of Alexandria with a vision for an enhanced cultural life.

It is a 10-year master plan to guide the work of the Office of the Arts and provides a framework for developing annual priorities and work plans aligning with available resources and prevailing budgets. The first step upon adoption of this plan is to outline immediate priorities and identify programs and activities to launch this plan.

DISCUSSION: The City of Alexandria Office of the Arts contracted with Cultural Planning Group (CPG) to lead the development of a city-wide cultural plan that shall define the role of the City in supporting, producing, defining, and sustaining arts and culture initiatives throughout the City to accomplish the City’s broader goals.

Steering Committee:

The Alexandria Commission for the Arts appointed a Steering Committee to provide input throughout the development of the *Arts and Culture Master Plan*:

Arts & Culture Master Plan Steering Committee:

- Beth Coast, Arts Commission
- Susie Cohen , Arts Commission
- Gayle Converse, Arts Commission
- Gwen Day-Fuller, Library Board, Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria
- Robin Havens-Parker, WMPA & Convergence
- Michelle Kozlak, Arts Commission
- Dawnielle Miller, Executive Director, Casa Chirilagua
- John Porter, President and Chief Executive Officer, ACT for Alexandria
- Jordan Potash, Assistant Professor Art Therapy Graduate Program, The George Washington University
- Matthew Stensrud (ex officio), Chair, Alexandria Commission for the Arts

Alexandria Commission for the Arts:

- Catherine Ahern
- Lisa Baranello
- Beth Coast
- Susan Cohen
- Gayle Converse
- Michael Detomo
- Shirley Downs
- Kate Elkins, Secretary
- Susan Amber Gordon, 2nd Vice Chair
- Allison Heck
- Betsy Hennigan
- Michelle Kozlak
- Allison Nance, Vice Chair
- Matthew Stensrud, Chair
- Karen Thomas

The Steering Committee met on October 27 to review the draft of the plan, to develop and to approve a recommendation for endorsing the Arts and Culture Master Plan. The Steering Committee's recommendation was presented to the Arts Commission at their November 1 meeting.

Arts Commission members who served on the Arts and Cultural Plan Steering Committee provided insights from the earlier Committee and Public Hearing meetings that were held prior to the November 1 meeting. After a discussion of the Arts and Culture Master Plan, the Arts Commission approved the plan (Attachment 2).

Community Outreach:

The community engagement process named Alexandria Creates, officially launched on February 23, 2016 and continued through June 30, 2016 with the close of the community survey. A mixed-method research effort using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies was employed. Public engagement activities included:

- Two Town Halls with over 100 people in attendance.
- Over 90 arts and cultural leaders, business leaders, and individual artists participated in discussion groups and in-depth interviews.
- Over 500 people completed the Open Community Survey.
- Over 200 community members attended open houses and community meetings.

Additional efforts were made to ensure a wide range of responses. Materials and the survey were translated into Spanish and distributed as paper versions. The following core questions were asked:

- What do you value about Alexandria's arts and cultural life?
- What is your vision for Alexandria's future?
- What do we need to accomplish the vision?

The community engagement process included online surveys, one-on-one and group interviews and research conducted by the consultants to ensure authentic and deliberate engagement with a broad cross section of Alexandria's community members and stakeholders. The goals were to:

- Bring together multiple points of view to inform the planning process;
- Create legitimacy and a sense of shared responsibility for the cultural plan;
- Cultivate new partners/allies and collaborations; and,
- Stimulate broad awareness and momentum for the plan.

Plan Components:

The undertaking of an arts and cultural plan by the City of Alexandria reveals possibilities for growth in the arts and cultural sectors, building and focusing the function of special events, and addressing internal challenges in order to achieve plan goals. The five core goals of this plan are:

Goal 1: Achieve equity, inclusion and access for arts, cultural, and creative endeavors.

Goal 2: Facilitate opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Goal 3: Support and foster a sustainable and diverse community of the arts.

Goal 4: Be a convener and facilitator for artistic and cultural expression.

Goal 5: Raise community awareness of the Office of the Arts as it continues to evolve as a leadership agency.

Each goal also outlines a series of strategies and a proposed timeline for implementation.

Plan Implementation:

It is intended that implementation will be guided through the existing effective task force structure with the Office of the Arts and the Commission for the Arts, consistent with implementation of the Public Art

Implementation Plan. Currently, the Office of the Arts and the Commission for the Arts develop annual work plans and establish annual task forces based on agreed upon priorities for each fiscal year. This task force will work with staff to develop annual work plans, focusing first on near term priorities and developing a process for monitoring the goals, initiatives, and success metrics. City-approved plans will be reviewed by the taskforce in order to coordinate and align the annual plan to the existing plans.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Arts and Culture Master Plan will provide the Office of the Arts with a framework for developing annual budget priorities, and work plans will be aligned with available resources and prevailing budgets.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Arts and Culture Master Plan
2. Arts Commission Motion, November 1, 2016 Meeting

STAFF:

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager

James Spengler, Director, Recreation Parks & Cultural Activities

Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities