

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE CITY COUNCIL NAMING COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED NAMING OF CITY HALL ROOM 2000 IN HONOR OF CHET AND SABRA AVERY

ISSUE: City Council consideration of the City Council Naming Committee's recommendation on the proposal by the Alexandrian Commission on Persons with Disabilities and the Alexandria Human Rights Commission to name City Hall Room 2000 in honor of Chet and Sabra Avery.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council receive the Naming Committee's recommendation and schedule the proposal to name City Hall Room 2000 in honor of Chet and Sabra Avery for public hearing and consideration at Council's November 13 public hearing meeting. The Naming Committee recommends naming City Hall 2000 in honor of Chet and Sabra Avery.

DISCUSSION: Alexandrians Chet and Sabra Avery have resided in the city for over 40 years and have been involved in numerous community activities. Both Chet and Sabra Avery have been tireless advocates for making City programs and facilities more accessible to persons with disabilities. Chet Avery recently advised Council that he did not intend to apply for reappointment to the Commission on Persons with Disabilities, which means that he would no longer serve as the Commission's designated representative to the Human Rights Commission.

In recognition of Chet and Sabra Avery's outstanding service to the community the Chairs of the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities and the Alexandria Human Rights Commission have written to Vice Mayor Kerry Donley and proposed that City Hall Conference Room 2000 be named the Chet and Sabra Avery Conference Room in their honor (Attachment 1). The Commission Chairs also recommended that a proclamation honoring Chet and Sabra Avery and proclaiming October 26 as Chet and Sabra Avery Day in Alexandria be presented to City Council. (The proclamation is included as item #4 on the October 26 Council docket.)

The proclamation (Attachment 2) describes how Chet and Sabra Avery worked tirelessly to remove barriers and to foster the full participation of persons with disabilities in Alexandria. City facilities and programs are as accessible as they are today due in large part to the many years of hard work by these two distinguished individuals.

The City Council Naming Committee (Councilwoman Pepper, Councilman Fannon and City Manager James Hartmann) met on October 15 and considered this request. The committee voted to recommend that the proposal to name City Hall Conference Room 2000 in honor of Chet and Sabra Avery be presented to City Council at its October 26 legislative meeting and be set for public hearing and consideration on Saturday, November 12.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: October 6, 2010 Email from Chuck Benagh to Vice Mayor Kerry J. Donley;

Attachment 2: Proclamation

STAFF:

Michele R. Evans, Deputy City Manager

Mike Hatfield, Disabilities Resources Coordinator, Office of Human Rights

From: "Chuck Benagh" <cbenagh@comcast.net>
Date: Wed, 6 Oct 2010 10:55:15 -0400
To: Kerry J. Donley<KDonley@VCBOnline.com>
Cc: <matsharris@hotmail.com>; Mike Hatfield<hatfield814@yahoo.com>;
<Jean.Niebauer@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Chet and Sabra Avery

Kerry Donley
Vice-Mayor
City of Alexandria

Dear Mr. Vice-Mayor:

The Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities
and the Alexandria Human Rights Commission
ask the City of Alexandria to honor Chet and Sabra Avery
in recognition of their decades of service to the citizens of Alexandria.

We recommend that a proclamation be issued recognizing their contributions
and designating October 26, 2010 as Chet and Sabra Avery Day.
We further recommend that Room 2000, Alexandria City Hall,
be named "The Chet and Sabra Avery Room"
with a plaque prominently displayed so designating the room in their honor.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Benagh, Chair
Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities

Matt Harris
Alexandria Human Rights Commission

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Chet and Sabra Avery have been Alexandria residents for over 40 years and have made major contributions to the betterment of the City of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery was the first appointee to the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities, on which he served for 36 years, working tirelessly, with his wife Sabra at his side, to remove barriers and to foster the full participation of persons with disabilities in the community life of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery began his career as a teacher and went on to hold leadership and executive positions with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Department of Education's Office of Special Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Office of Handicapped Concerns, Division of Blind and Visually Impaired; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery was appointed to and served on nearly 25 different Boards, Commissions, Committees, Councils and Workgroups, including the Special Education Advisory Committee for the Alexandria Public Schools, the Alexandria Human Rights Commission, the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council, the Virginia Assistive Technology System Advisory Council, and the Washington Ear; and

WHEREAS, Sabra Avery, who has been a quieter yet forceful catalyst for change and a proponent for fairness, regularly accompanied Chet Avery to City events and made certain that he was able to attend many of the meetings and discussions held by these various groups; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery served more than 25 years on the Alexandria Human Rights Commission, assuming leadership roles and advocating tenaciously for civil and human rights; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery has been an active volunteer with the Alexandria Library's Friends of the Talking Book Service and was appointed by the Library of Congress to serve on the National Library Consumer Advisory group; and

WHEREAS, Chet appeared with one of his granddaughters on a poster that was distributed nationwide for a "National Reading is for Everyone" campaign; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery was a principal leader in the development of audio description for plays, informational tours and movies, and served as a member of the Audio Description Advisory Committee of the National Captioning Institute and the Consumer Advisory Group of the WGBH Media Access Group, to make TV and other media components accessible to persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery has earned many awards, commendations, and honors including Alexandrian of the Year, John Duty Collins Outstanding Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, Sanford (Maine) High School Hall of Fame, Outstanding Leadership, Employee of the Year, Living Legend of Alexandria, and he has been named as one of the 200 community leaders who has shaped the life of the City of Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, with Sabra's support, Chet's long record of advocacy, accomplishments, and achievements transformed equal access to facilities, education, transportation, employment, information technology, voting, and recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM D. EUILLE, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, and on behalf of the Alexandria City Council, do hereby recognize Chet and Sabra Avery for their contributions to the Alexandria community and proclaim October 26, 2010, as:

“CHET AND SABRA AVERY DAY”

in the City of Alexandria and commend both Chet and Sabra Avery for providing distinguished service to our community and their tireless work toward ensuring the dignity, equality, independence and full participation of persons with disabilities in the life of our community.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, to be affixed this 26th day of October 2010.

WILLIAM D. EUILLE **MAYOR**
*On behalf of the City Council
of Alexandria, Virginia*

ATTEST:

Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk