


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 2, 2005

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: ALEXANDRIA CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL 2004 ANNUAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON A PERMANENT STRUCTURE FOR THE COUNCIL

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**ISSUE:** Receipt of the 2004 Annual Report of the Citizen Corps Council (CCC) (Attachment 1).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That City Council:

- (1) Receive the annual report which covers the activities of the Citizen Corps Council for Calendar Year 2004;
- (2) Approve the Citizen Corps Council recommendations for a permanent CCC; and
- (3) Request the City Attorney to draft an ordinance creating the CCC as a standing committee.

**DISCUSSION:** City Council reconstituted the CCC with 11 members on January 27, 2004 and appointed nine citizen members (Attachment 2). For the first year, the Citizen Corps Council was tasked with developing a mission statement, organizational structure, and final recommendation for a CCC as an ongoing entity. The Council, which is co-chaired by Councilman Gaines and Councilman Krupicka, accomplished these goals, sponsored a public forum on emergency preparedness, and launched the "Be Ready, Alexandria" campaign. The CCC partnered with the Fire Department and continued to build the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). The CCC met nine times in 2004.

The CCC recommends that City Council establish a permanent standing Citizen Corps Council with thirteen voting members, and two non-voting City Council members with CCC members appointed by City Council to three year terms. Of the thirteen voting members, eight of the positions would be designated for representatives of the Alexandria Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Alexandria business community, a civic association, the Alexandria Commission on Persons With Disabilities, a member in good-standing of the CERT program, a citizen designated by the Alexandria School Board, a representative of the Crime Prevention Council or an

individual with law enforcement or crime prevention experience, and a representative of the Emergency Medical Services Council, Medical Reserve Corps, or a person with emergency medical response experience. The other five positions would be filled by citizens-at large.

The proposed mission of the group is to see that the entire community is better prepared to respond appropriately to natural, accidental, and human-caused emergencies; to evaluate, catalyze, and empower Alexandria's many individuals, civic associations, schools, utilities, businesses, governments, and institutions to prepare for and respond to such emergencies; and to provide essential support to all persons in the City of Alexandria by effectively and efficiently working together in an emergency under unified direction.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None. The activities of the CCC are budgeted in the Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management. Over the past two years, grant funds have been obtained to support these activities. Grant funds will be applied for to support future activities. Some funding for the activities of the CCC will be included in the proposed budget.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1. 2004 Annual Report of the Citizen Corps Council

Attachment 2. Docket Item #23 from December 3, 2003

**STAFF:**

Gary Mesaris, Fire Chief

Mark Penn, Emergency Management Coordinator

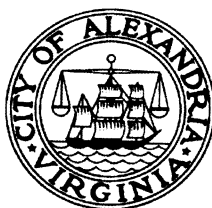
Laura Pettus, Emergency Management Analyst

**CALENDAR YEAR 2004  
ANNUAL REPORT OF**

**CITIZEN CORPS COUNCIL**

**PRESENTED TO THE ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2005**



**MAYOR WILLIAM D. EUILLE  
VICE MAYOR REDELLA S. PEPPER  
COUNCILMAN LUDWIG P. GAINES  
COUNCILMAN ROB KRUPICKA  
COUNCILMAN ANDREW H. MACDONALD  
COUNCILMAN PAUL C. SMEDBERG  
COUNCILWOMAN JOYCE WOODSON**

**JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

The National Citizen Corps Council was established as a part of the U.S.A. Freedom Corps by the President after the attacks of 9/11. The mission of the National Citizen Corps Council (CCC) is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds.

The City of Alexandria wanted to make our community safer and stronger. Initially, the City designated the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) as the Citizens Corps Council for Alexandria. The LEPC generally focuses on hazardous material issues and is not structured to support the efforts as outlined in the mission of the CCC. City Council reconstituted the CCC on January 27, 2004 and appointed two (2) Councilmembers and nine (9) Commission members.

The Citizen Corps Council included:

- Councilman Ludwig Gaines – City Council Liaison
- Councilman Rob Krupicka – City Council Liaison
- Pamela Alesky – Alexandria Chapter of the American Red Cross
- Amanda Babcock – Commission on Persons with Disabilities (Appointed 7/2004)
- Barbara Gilley – Commission on Persons with Disabilities (Relinquished Position 7/2004)
- Mary Gregerson – Emergency Medical Services Council
- John (Jay) Johnson – Alexandria City Public Schools
- Thomas Johnson – Chamber of Commerce
- Joann Miller – Commission on Aging
- Mariella Posey – Alexandria Federation on Civic Associations, East
- Mark Schwartz - Alexandria Federation on Civic Associations, West
- Unfilled – Alexandria Interfaith Association

The City Staff included:

- Mark Penn – Emergency Management Coordinator
- Laura Pettus – Emergency Management Analyst
- Richard Sisler – Citizen Corps Liaison (Resigned 9/2004)

The CERT members and Alexandria residents who attended the meetings included:

- Sterrett Carter – CERT member
- David Cheney – CERT member
- Marilee Cunningham – CERT member
- Bill Dickinson – CERT member
- Margaret French – CERT member
- Eda Hogan – CERT member
- Megan Jones – CERT member
- Brett Kyler – Alexandria resident
- Sarah Kyler – Alexandria resident
- Paul Mazzuca – CERT member
- Rita Tiefert – CERT member
- Michael Wenk – CERT member

The focus of the CCC was to develop a mission statement, organizational structure, and final recommendation for a permanent body for consideration by the City Council. The Citizen Corps Council was asked to submit a report to the City Council within one year of its initial meeting. Below is the description of the process, purpose statements, key goals, and program activities for the calendar year of 2004.

## **II. WORK PLAN**

The CCC met nine (9) times in the calendar year of 2004. The group set a schedule to meet the first Tuesday of every month from 7-9 P.M. at the Fire & EMS Training Academy. The meetings were open to the public and were listed on the calendar at the Citizen's Assistance Office.

During the first three months, the committee members familiarized themselves with each other, the organizations they each represented, and emergency management issues. Mark Penn, Emergency Management Coordinator, introduced the City's new structure for the Office of Emergency Management and the City's vision for emergency preparedness. The group collected studies on emergency preparedness, spoke with City volunteers, and gathered information from residents affected by the programs. The group developed a draft work plan, which outlined the time line for completing its aggressive agenda.

During the next three months, the group hosted guest speakers, held a brainstorming session, and formalized the vision and mission. Liz DeGreggorio, the Citizen Corps Liaison to the White House and an Alexandria resident, was invited as a guest speaker to present examples of best practices for Citizen Corps Councils across the country. She offered her expertise on what to keep in mind when developing the purpose and composition of the Citizen Corps Council. John Clizbe, Emergency Planner for the Health Department, was asked to speak at a meeting to offer his ideas on a City Medical Reserve Corps. Lisa Baker, Director of the Office on Women, facilitated a meeting on the purpose, priorities, and key tasks.

During the final three months, the group sought additional input from volunteers and the public. CCC gathered the research, information, expert presentations, and discussion material to guide the formulation of the organizational structure for consideration by the permanent Citizen Corps Council (see Attachment A: Alexandria Citizen Corps Council Proposed Structure.) Also, in accordance with the National CCC guidelines, the group formally recognized the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) as an operational arm of the Alexandria Citizen Corps Council. In order to hear from volunteers who would be working within the CCC composition, CERT members were invited to the meetings on organizational structure. To encourage wider participation from community members, the group held an emergency preparedness public forum in October. Emergency Management, Police, Health, and Schools presented information on the State of Emergency Preparedness within their respective agencies. The public was invited:

- to ask questions regarding the City's emergency preparedness efforts,
- to voice concerns with respect to security and safety, and
- to present ideas on the best ways for Alexandria to involve and coordinate with residents during emergencies.

All the meeting minutes are available on the Citizen Corps website <http://www.alexandriava.gov/city/citizencorps/> or by contacting the City Staff.

### **III. VISION AND MISSION**

The Citizen Corps Council wanted to develop a vision statement to reflect the aspirations for the future and to devise a succinct mission statement to delineate the direction and purpose of the organization.

The group discussed the direction, purpose, and priorities of the Citizen Corps Council, and a subcommittee was formed to draft the vision and mission statements. The subcommittee researched the National Citizen Corps Council statements, reviewed the statements of other Councils from around the country, and used the input from the larger group. Below are the vision and mission statements that were unanimously approved by the Citizen Corps Council:

#### Vision

Alexandria, Virginia will be a community that unites together to minimize or prevent the consequences of a disaster or threat to people's health, property, and safety.

#### Mission

The purposes of Alexandria Citizen Corps Council are:

- To better prepare the entire community for and respond appropriately to natural, accidental, and human-caused emergencies;
- To evaluate, catalyze, and empower Alexandria's many individuals, civic associations, schools, utilities, businesses, governments, and institutions to prepare for and response to such emergencies; and
- To provide essential support to all persons in the City of Alexandria by effectively and efficiently working together under unified direction during an emergency.

The group believes these statements capture the spirit and purpose of the Alexandria Citizen Corps Council.

### **IV. PRIORITY LIST**

The CCC has analyzed how to establish an appropriate framework and organization to support the City's emergency preparedness efforts. In its July meeting, Lisa Baker facilitated a brainstorming session on the key focus areas and priorities for the Council. The group created the following CCC list of priorities:

- To foster collaboration with all institutions within the City (e.g. businesses, schools, non-profits, associations, disaster relief groups, and City Departments);
- To establish and maintain effective communication with all City residents and response agencies;
- To facilitate readiness training for individual volunteers and community groups;
- To initiate and maintain wide-range community education on emergency preparedness;
- To ensure all residents and their diverse needs are recognized, addressed, and respected;
- To institute effective performance measures to accurately measure the readiness capabilities;
- To manage the development and retention of the volunteers who are supporting the City's readiness efforts; and
- To engage the community to participate in the City's readiness programs.

Additionally, the group developed a list of Alexandria-specific tasks that would be beneficial to the City. Listed below are a few of the tasks:

- To design educational resources for non-English speaking residents;
- To review the emergency communications and integrate communication organizations;
- To expand CERT training; To create/plan/execute emergency awareness month;
- To enhance community outreach;
- To create a volunteer database;
- To create a database of institutions/community assets relevant to disaster response; and
- To host a collaborative emergency preparedness forum.

By defining the priority list and specific task areas, the Citizen Corps was able to start some program activities during its first year.

## **V. 2004 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

In only its first year of existence, the Alexandria Citizen Corps Council accomplished a number of objectives that will help Alexandria be a safer and better prepared community. Each of these activities is directly tied to the vision statement, mission statement, key priorities, and specific tasks developed by the Citizen Corps Council. The program activities were the concerted effort of a number of talented volunteers, as well as, the dedicated City Staff. The programs include the Be Ready, Alexandria campaign, emergency preparedness public forum, Community Emergency Response Team training, benchmark survey, and a website.

### **A. Be Ready, Alexandria**

As part of the National Emergency Preparedness Month, Alexandria launched its Be Ready, Alexandria campaign in September of 2004. This effort intends to provide emergency preparedness information to every household and business in Alexandria. With the help of the CERT, Alexandria Red Cross, Alexandria Jaycees, and a host of civic associations, emergency preparedness packages have been delivered to over 10,000 homes. The educational packets will be distributed to the other 55,000 households and 8,000 businesses within the coming months.

### **B. Public Forum**

The Citizen Corps Council hosted Alexandria's first-ever, emergency preparedness public forum. The speakers included: Mark Penn, Emergency Management Coordinator for the City; Captain Al Tierney, Office of Intelligence and Internal Security for the Police Department; Sergeant Joe Watson, Community Support Section for the Police Department; John (Jay) Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Alexandria City Public Schools; and John Clizbe, Emergency Planner for the Health Department. The presentations were well received and the public offered positive feedback on the event and the presentations. Additionally, the public asked questions and offered comments on the following topics: volunteer management, the City's building security, chemical warfare, universal identification system, hospital surge capacity, small business outreach efforts, communicating emergency messages in different languages, and the use of a reverse 911 system. The public forum was conducted in City Council Chambers and was simultaneously broadcast live on Comcast Channel 69. The event has been re-broadcast on Comcast Channel 69 every Sunday evening from 9:00 to 11:30 P.M., since October. A full transcript of the event is available on the Citizen Corps website or by contacting the City Staff.

### C. CERT

The CCC partnered with the Fire Department and continued to build the Community Emergency Response Teams. In 2004, over 120 residents were trained as CERT volunteers. CERT members have responded to several incidents in Alexandria and assisted with emergency preparedness education efforts throughout the City. Several CERT members were deployed to Florida to assist in the disaster response to the hurricanes. In accordance with the National Citizen Corps Council guidelines, the CERT program was formally recognized as an operational arm of the Alexandria Citizen Corps Council

### D. Survey

The Citizen Corps Council participated in the City's resident survey. The group developed four questions on emergency preparedness, and the results provided a benchmark of the current level of preparedness by residents. The survey shows that 54% of those surveyed have developed an emergency communication plan to stay in touch with friends and relatives, and 43% of those surveyed have assembled an emergency preparedness kit.

### E. Website

The Citizen Corps Council launched a web site. The site can be accessed through the City web site or directly at <http://www.alexandriava.gov/city/citizencorps/> On the site, the Citizen Corps Council has links to the council members, the meeting minutes, meeting calendar, relevant emergency preparedness links, information on CERT training, and other resources.

## VI. FUTURE

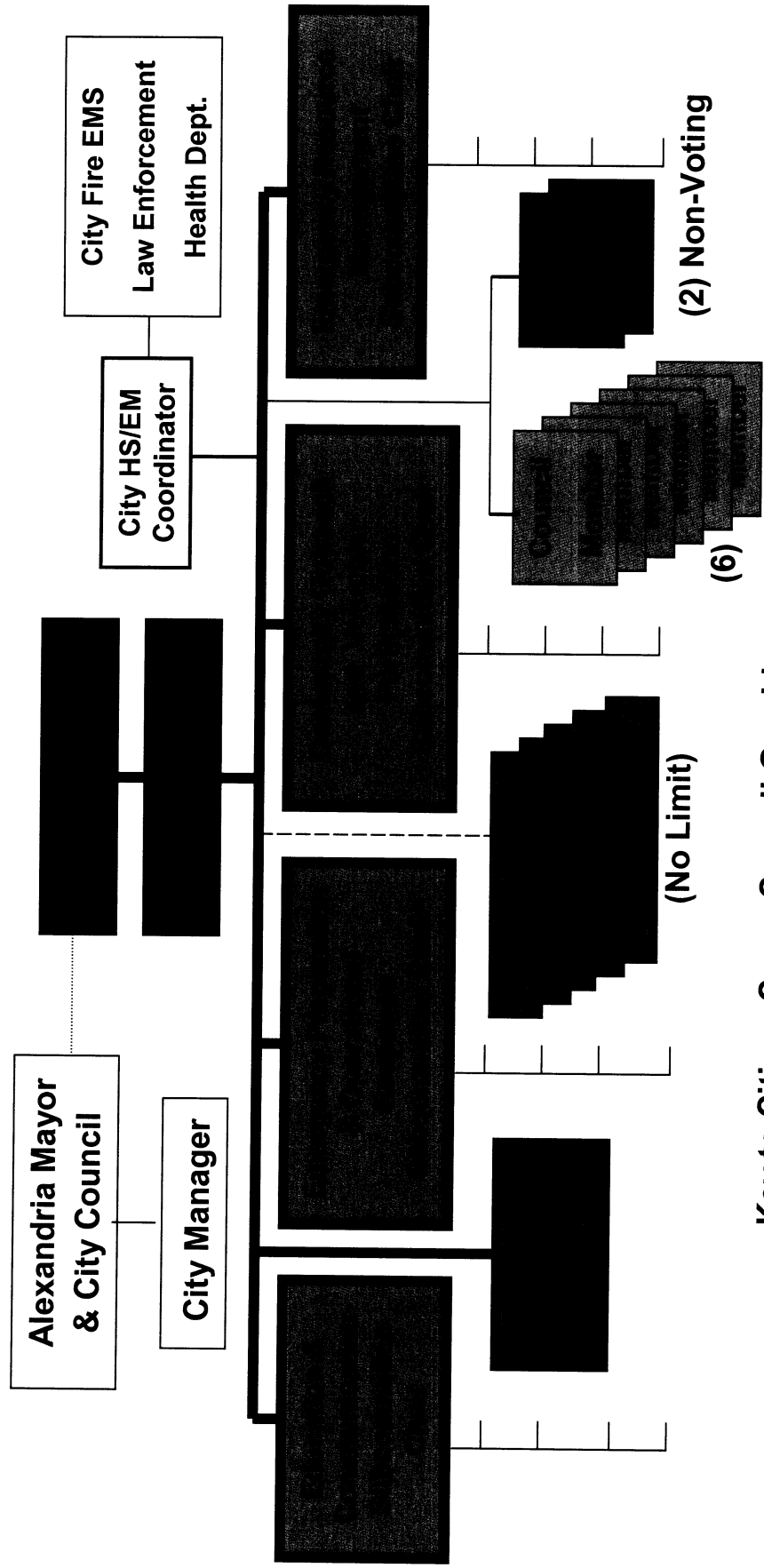
Looking to the future, the Citizen Corps Council wants to continue to move forward with the outlined Alexandria-specific tasks and key priorities. The group suggests that the Public Forum be better publicized and be repeated to continue to engage residents and businesses. The Citizen Corps Council wants to increase the number of residents and businesses trained in CERT. The group wants to work with the special-needs and non-English speaking communities on emergency preparedness and be more attentive to the issues within these communities.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The Citizen Corps Council has had huge success in accomplishing the many goals and objectives originally established by the City Council. During 2004, the group developed vision and mission statements, proposed an organizational structure, and developed recommendations for a permanent body. The group has participated in the effort to benchmark the emergency preparedness effort of the Alexandria residents and has started an emergency preparedness outreach campaign. The residents, businesses, and City staff are more engaged with emergency preparedness. The group has high hopes for the future effort between City staff, residents, businesses, and volunteers on emergency preparedness, communication, and outreach.



# Attachment A: Alexandria Citizen Corps Council Proposed Structure



**Key to Citizen Corps Council Graphic**

**Executive Committee:** Chairman, Vice Chairman, Council Secretary, 4 Subcommittee Chairs

**Citizen Corps Council:** above members (7) + 6 Council Members + 2 Non-Voting Members (from City Council)

**Focus Teams:** an unlimited number of Focus Teams or special activities may be added by the Council

**Denotes Executive Committee Member**

**Yellow = Major Tasking /Inputs to C3 Organization**

12-8-03

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 3, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO RECONSTITUTE THE ALEXANDRIA CITIZEN  
CORPS COUNCIL TO ENHANCE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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**ISSUE:** Request from Councilmen Ludwig Gaines and Rob Krupicka to increase citizen involvement in the emergency preparedness process.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council approve the reconstitution of the Citizen Corps Council as the vehicle to increase citizen involvement in the emergency preparedness process.

**DISCUSSION:** Councilmen Gaines and Krupicka have discussed the possibility of expanding the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to provide for broader citizen representation in the emergency preparedness process, and noted that both of them would be meeting with staff to discuss their proposal and come back to Council with a recommendation.

The LEPC, per federal legislation, is responsible for: devising and distributing emergency plans aimed at addressing hazardous materials; completing emergency plans which include an identification of facilities subject to the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA); a listing of methods and procedures to respond to a release of hazardous materials and other tasks associated with responding to biological, radiological, and chemical events.

Currently, the LEPC has been designated as the local Citizens Corps Council to meet the federal grant requirements for the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program. Alexandria has received one CERT grant this year for \$14,421 and will apply for a second grant this month to address the needs of the Spanish-speaking community. Several jurisdictions, including Arlington County, have a Citizens Corps Council which works in tandem with their LEPC and has a number of citizen groups in its membership.

Because of the LEPC's narrow focus, Councilmen Gaines and Krupicka believe it is more appropriate to reconstitute the Alexandria Citizen Corps Council as a separate entity, apart from the LEPC, to perform the function they envision. This function would include assisting the public in preparing for emergencies by outreaching to the community and obtaining its input in the

City's overall disaster response. Tasks could include public emergency communication and education programs; identification of community groups, agencies and volunteers to participate in disaster relief efforts; and management of community resources for disaster, e.g. Chamber of Commerce and business partnerships, Interfaith Association, United Way, Salvation Army, etc.

Councilmen Gaines and Krupicka propose an 11-member Citizen Corps Council, to be appointed by the City Manager, that will have the following membership: two members of City Council who will serve as co-chairs; one representative from the Commission on Persons With Disabilities; one representative from the Commission on Aging; one representative from the Alexandria Chapter of the Red Cross; two representatives designated by the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations (one from the east end of the City and one from the west end of the City); one representative from the Alexandria Interfaith Association; one representative from the Chamber of Commerce; one representative from the Alexandria Public Schools; and one representative from the Alexandria Emergency Medical Services Council (EMS). The Citizen Corps Council should submit a report to the City Council within one year of its initial meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None

**STAFF:**

Rose Williams Boyd, Executive Secretary for Boards and Commission