

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THE FY 2004 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING

ISSUE: Receipt of the Alexandria Commission on Aging Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That City Council receive the Annual Report from the Commission on Aging and thank the Commission members for their efforts on behalf of the City.

DISCUSSION: The Alexandria Commission on Aging is a 21 member Advisory Board appointed by City Council to serve as the principal advocate for issues relating to aging in Alexandria. Their annual report (Attachment) lists a number of activities for 2003-2004:

- ▶ Analysis of the comprehensive Senior Needs Survey and submission of report to City Council on April 13, 2004.
- ▶ Continued involvement in planning and advocacy for affordable assisted living for low income seniors in Alexandria.
- ▶ Participation in regional discussions regarding establishing a PACE Program, a Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly, in Northern Virginia.
- ▶ Successful advocacy efforts regarding senior transportation resulting in City Council approving \$30,000 for funding Senior Taxi Extension and \$5,000 to correct inequity relating to the cost of transportation for disabled seniors needing accessible vehicles through DOT.

ATTACHMENT:

The Alexandria Commission on Aging 2004 Annual Report.

STAFF:

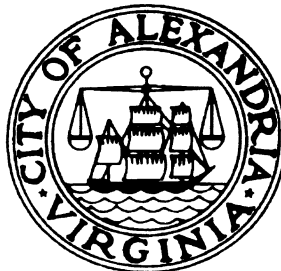
Debra Collins, Director, Department of Human Services
Jack Powers, Director, Division of Community Programs
MaryAnn Griffin, Director, Office of Aging and Adult Services
Debbie Ludington, Long Term Care Coordinator, Office of Aging and Adult Services

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

**COMMISSION ON AGING
ANNUAL REPORT**

JUNE, 2004

**Respectfully Submitted by:
Don Fowler, Chair**



The City of Alexandria Commission on Aging

Annual Report June 2004

Introduction:

The objectives of the Commission have remained unchanged over the years. It is a watchdog agency concerned with the standard of livelihood of senior citizens, in Alexandria, the Commonwealth of Virginia and in the Nation generally. The Commission is made up of twenty-one members, appointed by the City Council for a term of three years. Eleven of the twenty-one are persons 60 years of age or older, five persons are individually designated and represent special related groups or interests and one is an elected official. Vice Mayor Del Pepper, over many years, has represented the City Council on the Commission, effectively supporting the elderly population of Alexandria. We are interested in all public and private agencies dealing with the affairs of the elderly. We follow closely the laws and regulations, including the Older Americans Act, and the public appropriations affecting the lives of persons 55 years of age and older. We work closely with similar commissions in the Northern Virginia area to make our advocacy effective and relevant for all of its citizens.

Chair's objectives for 2003 - 2004:

- Complete the Needs Assessment Survey for Seniors
- Expand the scope of transportation services outside of City limits within a reasonable distance for senior citizens and persons with disabilities
- Research complex issues of elder abuse and neglect and advocate reforms
- Participate in a City sponsored task force to develop an affordable assisted living project for Alexandria
- Assist in the selection of a Director of the Department of Human Services and of the Director of the Office of Aging and Adult Services
- Rejuvenate the program of senior services information (Prime Time page in the Alexandria Gazette)

Accomplishments:

Much of the work of the Commission is done through its six Committees, organized under its respective Chairs as follows:

- Access and Community Services Justine Rowe
- Housing William Harris
- Public Safety Helen McMaster

- Health Mary Parker
- Income and Employment Susan Dawson
- Education and Cultural Affairs Joann Miller

Each member of the Commission has a committee assignment and on average the committees meet at least once each month. They report their activities and make their recommendations at the regular monthly meetings of the Commission. The accomplishments of these working groups are impressive and the major ones are reported herein. Naturally, some projects are on-going and are in the pipe line awaiting further actions.

Needs Assessment Survey

An outstanding accomplishment of the year was the completion of the Senior Citizens Needs Assessment Survey. The assessment report was presented to the City Council at its meeting on April 13, 2004 and was referred to the city Manager and Staff for study and implementation. The recommendations of the Survey are here summarized:

- Develop an innovative and comprehensive outreach plan
- Expand services available to older seniors age 75 and older
- Support expansion and development of affordable housing for seniors
- Support and improve transportation programs for seniors
- Develop and support prescription medication programs for senior citizens of low income
- Expand employment opportunities for Alexandria seniors

HOUSING

Members of the Commission serve on the Assisted Living Work Group appointed by the City Manager and are working toward the expansion of facilities in Alexandria for those seniors who qualify for such assistance. The Housing Committee follows up on all housing problems of seniors and keeps the Commission members aware of the multiple needs in the housing area.

HEALTH

The Commission supported a Work Group to explore the feasibility of establishing a Northern

Virginia Pace Program to help meet the needs of the frail elderly in Alexandria. PACE programs aim to provide an all inclusive care service for the elderly. The Commission views with satisfaction the important improvements in the coordination of health care for seniors in Alexandria, especially for those seniors living in the Ladrey and Annie B. Rose housing units. While relaxing its direct participation in the coordination process, the Commission will maintain its vigil.

COMMUNITY CENTER DEVELOPMENT

The Commission has maintained a continuing interest in the creation of a Community Center for Alexandria. It has supported a capital program and designated space for such a center in the Cameron Station area and continues to seek alternative programs for the convenience and service of all Alexandria Seniors. A comprehensive community center program has been proposed to compare favorably with those adjacent communities. In the last year, it has studied the plans for renovation of the Chinquapin Recreation Center along with the plans for a new high school in the T.C. Williams area. A member of the Commission has been assigned to follow closely the planning as it proceeds. Convenient parking for the elderly at the Chinquapin Recreation Center could be a serious problem.

INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

The Commission has supported a number of programs for seniors, including tax abatements for the low-income elderly, and employment opportunities for those over 55 years of age. The City's Annual Utilization and Tracking Report, which provides information on City employment practices, was closely reviewed and recommendations were made to the City for further improvements in promotion policies and employment practices generally.

TRANSPORTATION

A satisfactory conclusion has been reached on extended taxi service for seniors in Alexandria. The City Council, with strong Commission support, appropriated \$30,000 for taxi rides for medical services outside the city limits up to a radius of five miles. In addition, the City Council, with the support of the Commission on Aging and the Commission on Persons with Disabilities, approved an appropriation of \$5000 to correct an inequity relating to the cost of transportation service for disabled persons. Reasonable people working together with a cooperating City Government can make life better for aging persons of limited income.

INFORMATION FOR THE ELDERLY

Through radio, television and the press, the elderly in our city are kept informed of programs available to them. PRIME TIME is a special page in the Alexandria Gazette that on a monthly basis presents special information of interest to senior citizens. Through cooperation between the staff of the Alexandria Office of Aging and Adult Services and the Gazette, the information

provided has been expanded and improved. We are grateful to the staff on the Office of Aging and local press for this action. In the year to come, we will study the possibility of better coverage of elderly information by the local radio and television stations. This will be part of our outreach objective, growing out of the results of the Needs Assessment.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

During the year a number of organizations have presented programs at the meetings of the Commission, for the education of members and to advocate programs for the elderly. This year was especially productive as follows:

- Special Aides for Seniors, presented by Carol Stewart of the Office of Aging and Adult Services
- Creation of an Alzheimer's Clinic in Northern Virginia by Dr. James Burgess
- Programs of Office on Aging and Adult Services by MaryAnn Griffin
- Planning for Community Center by Sandra Whitmore, Director of Recreation
- Elderly Benefit and Check up Program by Dan Evans, NCOA
- Danger of Static Fires at Gas Pump by Sharon Halstead, Fire Department
- Advance Directives by Linda Drake, Goodwin House
- Long Term Care Insurance by Jay Bell, CLTC

COMMENDATIONS

My special thanks to the Members of the Commission, to the staff members of the Office of Aging and Adult Services and to the personnel of the Alexandria City Government for their cooperation and support of our efforts to make life ever better and more worthwhile for the elderly of our Community. I have enjoyed serving for several years as the Chair of the Commission, witnessing its trials and its successes, and appreciating the high level of devoted service by so many cooperating persons.

Donald D. Fowler
Chair, Alexandria Commission on Aging
June 2004