


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 16, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: FY 2006 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

ISSUE: Receipt of the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report (Attachment).

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

DISCUSSION: The Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities is a 17-member advisory Board appointed by City Council to serve as the principal advocate for issues relating to disability in Alexandria. The Annual Report (Attachment) highlights a number of activities for 2005-2006:

- Meeting with the Boards of Architectural Review in a work session to discuss the challenges of making historic structures accessible to persons with disabilities;
- Partnering with the City to develop and implement a survey of employees to identify the employment status of workers with disabilities;
- Honoring Jeffrey M. McAllister at a Commemoration Day ceremony, which included the dedication of two memorial trees and a plaque at Waterfront Park;
- Working with DASH to defer a fare increase until a senior and person with disability discount fare card is introduced so that DASH can become part of a seamless DC Metropolitan area transportation system;
- Providing input on DOT's new reservation and reporting system and working with T&ES on revisions for DOT's No-show policy and Rights and Responsibilities;
- Developing a web site to serve as an informational resource on the Commission and disability issues;

- Continuing efforts in disability awareness throughout the year including “Disability Employment Awareness Month,” National Disability Mentoring Day, and the Annual Departmental ADA Coordinators’ Training; and
- Sponsoring other annual events including the presentation of the Gerry Bertier Scholarship, John Duty Collins III Outstanding Advocate Award, and the Disability Awareness Business Awards presented in conjunction with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.

ATTACHMENT: The Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report.

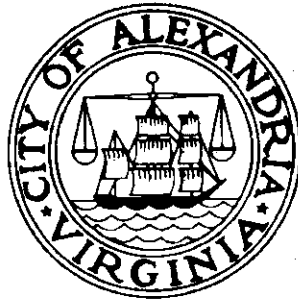
STAFF:

Mike Hatfield, Disability Resources Coordinator, Office of Human Rights

Jean Kelleher Niebauer, Director, Office of Human Rights

Acpd

**ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**



**ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2006**

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request this document in an alternative format e-mail mike.hatfield@alexandriava.gov or call (703) 519-3357, TTY 711.

**Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities
Members who served during Fiscal Year 2006**

**Sherman Anderson
Chet Avery
Amanda Babcock, Current Chair
Chuck Benagh
Michael Carrasco
Merry Dawson Bown
Joe Delfico
Melanie DeMayo
Robyn Fitzgerald
Louise Harrison
Anne Marie Hohman
Tara Hughes, Vice Chair
Jane Kachulis
Jennifer Keener
Laura Lantzy
Carl Lee
Jeff McAllister, Chair
Tom Sachs
Ruth Soto
Tanishia Williams-Minor**



Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2006

INTRODUCTION

The Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities (ACPD or "the Commission") is a 17 member volunteer citizen body appointed by the Mayor and City Council. The Commission is comprised of 14 citizen members, a representative of the Alexandria Commission on Aging, and two representatives of the business community (one from the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and one at-large). A majority of the citizen members are persons with disabilities. The Commission is organized into an executive committee and five standing committees, as well as ad hoc committees. Through its committees, the Commission focuses its work on issues related to transportation, accessibility, housing, employment, and public awareness. ACPD's monthly meetings are typically held at City Hall, Room 2000, at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month.

Among other things, ACPD provides advice to the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager on policies, programs, and legislation affecting Alexandria residents who have a disability; makes recommendations regarding the City's affirmative action plan; and provides a forum for the expression of concerns and problems by persons with disabilities. The ACPD also serves as Alexandria's Disability Services Board (DSB). Every three years, the DSB develops and makes available for public comment a comprehensive needs assessment identifying local needs, service gaps, priority populations, and services for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities. The DSB also administers the local Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund (RSIF) to leverage private and public dollars to improve service delivery and public awareness regarding its target population. The Virginia General Assembly through the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) grants the RSIF funds.

The Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities respectfully submits its annual report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006, highlighting the Commission's activities and accomplishments in the areas of transportation, accessibility, housing, employment, awards and public awareness.

Special Note:

Jeffrey M. McAllister was elected Chair of ACPD in May 2005. Mr. McAllister served as the Chair from July 1 until his death August 30, 2005. Amanda Babcock, Vice-Chair, became Chair at that time. After Ms. Babcock's succession, Tara Hughes was elected Vice-Chair. ACPD wishes to acknowledge that during

his short tenure as a member and as Chair of ACPD, Mr. McAllister made a significant impact due to his commitment and energies devoted to the Commission's work. He is missed.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Committee was very busy during FY06. WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) experienced several significant problems with its services for persons with disabilities. In addition, the City of Alexandria started a study of non-automotive transportation issues. As a result, transit issues were (and continue to be) a "hot" topic in Alexandria, the DC metropolitan area, and the Commonwealth of Virginia during FY06.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Study

Funded by the Commonwealth, the City and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program launched a study of non-automotive infrastructure needs and sought ACPD's input. This mobility needs assessment of the City's infrastructure for persons with disabilities, pedestrians, and cyclists works in conjunction with the City's transportation master plan.

DASH and DOT

ACPD continued its strong relationship with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) concerning input on DASH and DOT. During FY06, DASH voted to increase its fares. As a result, the Transportation Committee met with T&ES concerning fears of any subsequent fare increases in the DOT program. DOT fares were not increased. ACPD recommended that the DASH fare increase be deferred until a senior and person with disability discount swipe fare card is introduced in a year or so to enable DASH to be a part of a seamless D.C. Metropolitan area transportation system. This fare card would save the City \$150,000 - \$200,000. If the City doesn't have a common fare card they will not be reimbursed by Metro and the City will have to cover the cost. ACPD also supported the maintenance of the 4-hour window program and the current monthly fare pass program. DASH agreed with and accepted ACPD's recommendations.

Additionally, the committee provided input on routes and the new DOT reservation and reporting system. It was recommended that T&ES should have a work session with the Mayor, City Council, ACPD, and Commission on Aging to review the DOT and Senior Taxi Programs in FY 2007. ACPD worked with T&ES on revisions for DOT's No-show policy and Rights and Responsibilities.

WMATA

MetroAccess is a paratransit program offered by WMATA for persons with disabilities who are unable to ride the fixed route system. A new vendor was given this contract and it was a difficult transition period for MetroAccess customers who were severely impacted by poor management and

communication of MetroAccess and the new vendor. As a result riders experienced problems that included, but are not limited to, losing their services, waiting for scheduled rides for several hours, and stress due to fears of being stranded or dropped from the program.

Mayor Euille, who serves as the City's representative on the WMATA Board expressed his concerns and recommended to WMATA that its Board establish a committee to monitor MV Transportation's performance and to get direct input for the consumers. In addition, the Transportation Committee met with Christian Kent, Director of MetroAccess, to discuss ACPD's concerns and the problems. Mr. Kent assured ACPD that his office would work with and communicate more effectively with the network of DSB Chairs and their respective Transportation Committees in Virginia who can influence the representatives from their jurisdictions on the WMATA Board on MetroAccess issues and policies.

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission

Councilman Ludwig Gaines began serving as the City Council liaison to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. In his new role, Councilman Gaines has been working with ACPD to develop a deeper understanding of transportation issues for persons with disabilities. For instance, Councilman Gaines accompanied Tara Hughes, ACPD's Vice-Chair, and Commissioner Jane Kachulis during their commutes to work.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Accessibility Enhancement Committee (AEC) continued its efforts to assist the City of Alexandria in removing barriers and ensuring that its new projects are fully accessible to its residents and visitors.

Outdoor Dining

AEC worked with the Code Enforcement officials and restaurant owners to develop standards for outdoor dining that permitted persons with mobility impairments to comfortably use the sidewalks adjacent to the dining areas.

Board of Architectural Review (BAR)

In order to have a better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, ACPD met with the Boards of Architectural Review (BAR). In a work session aimed at teaching the ACPD what the BAR looks for when it reviews proposed projects, ACPD explained the challenges of making historic structures accessible to persons with disabilities. The result was a greater appreciation of each other's concerns and a promise to work together more cooperatively in the future.

Memorandum of Understanding

Under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding between the ACPD and the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), and the draft

MOU with the Department of General Services, the Accessibility Enhancement Committee continued to review proposed construction projects for the City of Alexandria. Projects reviewed included: the Apothecary Museum, Fire Station 202 (Del Ray), City Hall and Market Square Garage elevator upgrades, Duncan Library, bus shelters for the Carlyle project, and the Eisenhower Trail.

HOUSING

The Commission will continue to advocate to City Council and the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority on behalf of persons with disabilities about the dire and critical need of affordable, accessible housing in the City. The City's Office of Housing's Project and Residential Assistance Modification Program ("RAMP") has actively worked to modify and rehabilitate existing housing to meet the accessibility needs of residents. ACPD continues to make referrals to the program and inform persons with disabilities that RAMP is actively seeking to assist persons with accessibility and modifications needs.

EMPLOYMENT

Survey

The Employment Committee worked with the City to develop and implement a survey of employees to determine the employment status of workers with disabilities. Eventually, future surveys like this will provide critical data for evaluating the results of city programs.

Utilization Analysis Report

The Committee reviewed City's FY 2005 Utilization Analysis Report (UA) and Application Tracking System Report (AT). These reports provide information on the City's Equal Employment Opportunity-Affirmative Action Plan (EEO-AAP).

The Committee found that:

1. Upward mobility programs include few people with disabilities; and
2. People with disabilities are not included in the City's Workforce Analyses.

The Committee recommended that:

1. The City change their reporting format; and
2. The City enhance opportunities for people with disabilities.

Disability Awareness Month

The Committee helped organize the activities for the annual Disability Awareness Month held in October. These activities included:

1. Mayor's annual Disability Employment Awareness Month Proclamation,
2. City Employment and Training data for People with Disabilities,
3. Mentoring Day,
4. Annual ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Coordinator Training,
5. Disability Awareness Training for Supervisors, and
6. Summer Youth Employment Program.

JobLink

The Employment Committee initiated activities designed to expose and highlight the City's efforts, through JobLink, to assist people with disabilities find employment in the private sector. These activities included:

1. Periodically meeting with JobLink to review their activities,
2. Working with JobLink on the preparation periodic reports to the Commission,
3. Analyzing trends in training and placement, and
4. Reviewing the link with DRS and accumulation employment information on people with disabilities from other programs such those dealing with youth employment.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Ceremony and Fundraiser for Commission Awards

The ACPD held its annual awards ceremony on June 13 by hosting a reception at City Hall. Mayor William D. Euille, members of City Council, award recipients, family, and friends attended. Each year, the Commission seeks nominations for three Commission awards.

Mary Louise Simpson was the recipient of the John Duty Collins III Outstanding Advocate Award for 2006. The John Duty Collins III Outstanding Advocate Award, established in 1989 in memory of John Duty Collins III, a founder and Vice Chair of the Commission, is presented to an individual who has worked tirelessly for persons with disabilities by advocating on their behalf. The award includes a \$500 donation in the recipient's name to an organization of the recipient's choice that contributes to the promotion of equal opportunity for persons with disabilities within the City of Alexandria. Ms. Simpson was the first person hired as a reservationist by Senior Services of Alexandria for the City of Alexandria-funded paratransit program, DOT. Over her 22 years of service, Ms. Simpson scheduled approximately 350,000 reservations for persons with disabilities.

Bishop Ireton High School was awarded a Community Organization Grant. The Community Organization Grant was established to assist nonprofit agencies throughout Alexandria with their efforts to remove barriers and extend services to Alexandria's residents with physical or sensory disabilities. This year's grant is \$1000 with a 20% match by Bishop Ireton to enhance its commitment to persons with disabilities and providing educational opportunities for everyone by removing existing barriers and modifying its facilities. Bishop Ireton purchased wheelchair accessible desks for its classrooms to accommodate its students who are wheelchair users.

The Commission also awards the Gerry Bertier Scholarship for students who are residents of Alexandria with physical or sensory disabilities seeking post-high

school training, technical school, community college, undergraduate, or graduate education. There was no recipient for the scholarship this year.

ACPD hosted a fundraiser to support its awards. The fundraiser was a cooperative effort between the Port City Playhouse and the Commission. The play, Summer and Smoke, was performed in June 2006 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center Auditorium. This site was selected because of its state-of-the-art accessibility features including, but not limited to, comfortable wheelchair access, audio description system for persons who are blind, and assistive listening devices for individuals with hearing impairments.

Emergency Preparedness and Citizen Corps Council

ACPD continues to follow the Emergency Preparedness Plan that has been developing over the last several years. ACPD is always willing to assist on the efforts to upgrade the Plan to ensure that persons with disabilities are considered. ACPD has a designated member on Citizen Corps Council (CCC) and was actively involved during the Citizen Corps Council's first year as it worked to organize and establish committees, goals, and objectives. ACPD is happy to report that CCC is committed to finding ways to improve emergency preparedness for persons with disabilities.

Web Site

ACPD developed a web site to serve as an informational resource on the Commission and disability issues. ACPD will continue to work with the City's information technology staff to maintain the content on the City's web site.

Commemoration Day

Mayor William D. Euille and the members of the City Council issued a Proclamation declaring May 20, 2006, "Commemoration Day" to honor the ACPD members who died during their term of service to the City of Alexandria. On Saturday, May 20, the ACPD dedicated two memorial trees and a plaque in memory of Jeffrey M. McAllister, former Chair of ACPD, at Waterfront Park.

SUMMARY

The Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities continues its work on behalf of persons with disabilities in Alexandria to remove all remaining physical and attitudinal barriers to ensure equal access and full integration to all City programs, services, and activities. In addition, ACPD encourages the City's leadership and employees to conduct their day-to-day operations to maintain a commitment to persons with disabilities and the ADA, which protects people with disabilities from discrimination in employment, provides access to telecommunications and public and private services and accommodations, and creates an environment that promotes equal opportunity and independence.

ACPD recognizes that the many positive accomplishments in Alexandria result not only from civil rights ensured by the ADA, but also from the significant involvement of the Mayor, City Council members, and the residents of Alexandria. On behalf of Alexandrians with disabilities, the ACPD will continue to advocate, challenge, and partner for further progress for people with disabilities to live, work, be independent, and enjoy the benefits of full access to community life in the City of Alexandria.

The City of Alexandria is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you would like to request this material in an alternative format, please e-mail mike.hatfield@alexandriava.gov or call 703-519-3357, TTY 711.