Mayor discusses fall legislative priorities

First Council legislative meeting includes General Assembly update

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

City Council held its first 2022-2023 legislative meeting on Tuesday evening, in which a discussion took place about the General Assembly’s recently granted permissive authority and preparation of upcoming docket items.

Ahead of the meeting, Mayor Justin Wilson shared with the Times his overall thoughts surrounding the upcoming year and what items council is planning on tackling this fall.

“I’m excited. This is kind of the year when really things get done,” Wil-

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Streaming toward change

City holds first community meeting on future of Taylor and Strawberry Run

BY KASSIDY MCDONALD

On Saturday, the city held the first Consensus Building Group meeting to discuss possible future design plans and outcomes for Taylor Run and Strawberry Run.

The meeting, held at the Alexandria Renew Education Center, was led by the Institute for Engagement and Negotiation at the University of Virginia, and co-hosted by the City of Alexandria’s Transportation and Environmental Services, Stormwater Management Division and the Department of Project Implementation.

The workshop was the latest chapter in a three-year debate between the city and local environmentalists about the best way to restore city streams, with local environmental groups pushing back against the proposed use of Natural Channel Design, a method that would result in the loss of more than 100 mature trees at Taylor Run alone.

In April 2021, City Council instructed staff to pause moving forward with Natural Channel Design and to engage with the community on a path forward. These workshops, which will continue through October, are

PHOTO/AMANDA DOLASINSKI

The first Consensus Building Group Meeting was held on Sept. 10 to discuss possibilities for Taylor and Strawberry Run.

PHOTO/DENISE DUNBAR

The Joint Public Safety Honor Guard at the Sept. 11 Remembrance Ceremony Sunday at city hall. See more on page 10.

PHOTO/OLIVIA ANDERSON

Walter Hammersley, an Alexandria native, celebrated his 100th birthday this year.

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City resident shot Saturday night

One person was shot in the 3800 block of Old Dominion Boulevard on Sunday night, according to the Alexandria Police Department.

The shooting happened around 7:30 p.m. A 50-year-old man was reported shot and taken to George Washington University Hospital with non-life threatening injuries, according to ALXnow. APD is still investigating the incident.

Anyone with information on the shooting can contact Detective Robert Hill at Robert.hill@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-6712. Callers can remain anonymous.

Virginia American Water Rate opposition

On behalf of its water customers, the City of Alexandria has formally objected to the Virginia American Water’s request to the State Corporation Commission to raise water rates, according to a news release.

The city believes the company’s proposed profit margin should be lower, the rate of bill increases should be gradual and the costs of serving customers should be allocated among residential, commercial and industrial customers, according to the release.

The company seeks to increase its rates to produce additional annual jurisdictional sales revenues totaling $14.3 million and an annual water service rate increase of $11,565,880, or 27.35%. The bill for an average residential customer using 4,5000 gallons of water per month would increase by about 40%, or $117 per year.

Community members can submit online feedback with the State Corporation Commission by Sept. 20. The commission will hold a public hearing on Sept. 23 at 10 a.m. and Sept. 27 at 10 a.m., where participants may join via telephone, webcast or in-person.

To submit comments, visit https://scc.virginia.gov/case comments/comment/PUR-2021-00255.

Volunteer Alexandria to hold open house

Volunteer Alexandria, Alexandria’s link between individual and group volunteers and area nonprofits, and The Spitfire Club, an innovative nonprofit book club and empowerment community for girls, announced an open house of their new offices with a ribbon cutting ceremony and donation drive that will take place on Sept. 29, according to a news release.

The event is open to the public and will take place from 4 to 8 p.m. The ribbon cutting ceremony will take place around 5:45 p.m., with Mayor Justin Wilson and members of City Council, among other partners. Light refreshments and snacks will be served.

Volunteer Alexandria and The Spitfire Club are also holding two donation drives and are asking the community to drop off clean or new reusable bags or participate in a children’s book swap at their new offices located at 2202 Mount Vernon Ave.

The reusable bag drive continues through Oct. 30 and is supported by the Library Teen Advisory Group. Bags can be dropped off at one of these locations: 2202 Mount Vernon Ave., 5005 Duke St., 2501 Commonwealth Ave. and 717 Queen St.

For more details on Volunteer Alexandria, please visit https://www.volunteeralexandria.org. For more information about The Spitfire Club visit https://www.thespitfireclub.org/about.

- kmcdonald@alextimes.com
The British Officers Club of Washington, D.C. has created a book of condolences for Queen Elizabeth II, which interested residents are encouraged to sign.

Anyone who wishes to express their condolences for the longest serving monarch in British history is encouraged to visit the Athenaeum, located at 201 Prince St., until Saturday at 4 p.m.

Signings are available today from 2 to 7 p.m., tomorrow from noon to 4 p.m. and on Saturday from noon to 4 p.m.

Once the book of condolences closes, the Athenaeum will host a short commemoration ceremony where anyone interested in speaking may do so.

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Queen Elizabeth II’s book of condolences

The City of Alexandria held its first in-person annual Citizenship Day celebration on Tuesday in Market Square, where 25 candidates representing 24 countries were naturalized.

A U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services official gave the Oath of Allegiance to the candidates, all of whom had to meet federal requirements in order to become a naturalized citizen. The requirements include a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States; ability to read, write and speak English; understanding of U.S. history; good moral character and attachment to constitutional principles.

The city will also celebrate Constitution Day and Citizenship Day on Saturday, which honors both native-born and naturalized citizens. If weather permits, the event will be held in Market Square. If not, it will be held in the Council Chambers on the second floor of city hall.

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Alexandria holds naturalization ceremony
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the next stage of that interaction. A final report, created by IEN that encompasses all of the discussions and ideas from the workshops, will be presented to City Council around December, according to the city’s website.

The two most contentious aspects of this discussion to date have centered on a grant Alexandria received from the Virginia state government and credits for pollution reduction in the Chesapeake Bay.

The issue dates back to 2020, when the city was awarded a $2.25 million Stormwater Local Assistance Fund grant for partial funding of the Taylor Run Stream Restoration Project.

The grant program was initiated by the Commonwealth of Virginia to “provide financial support to municipalities implementing projects to reduce stormwater pollution as the new Environmental Protection Agency Chesapeake Bay water quality requirements were being passed down through the stormwater permits,” according to the city’s website.

Since the grant was awarded, the formula used to calculate the credits has been discredited, as it was based on flawed methodology that made assumptions on phosphorus levels based on those found in Pennsylvania streams that had experienced fertilizer runoff from nearby farms. On-site testing at Alexandria’s stream beds subsequently revealed much lower phosphorus levels than the assumptions attached to credits.

The methodology surrounding the awarding of credits has subsequently been changed, but the 2020 grant was not rescinded, even though it was based on the former formula.

Kathie Hoekstra, chair of the environmental policy commission and a stakeholder advisory group member, said the credits are no longer a fac-
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**STREAM FROM | 6**

“Why did they not do it right the first time, to begin with?” Parajon said, that’s no longer a worry ...

Parajon also stated emphatically that the potential state grant will not be the overriding factor in the city’s decision on restoring Taylor Run and Strawberry Run.

He told the public that this effort is not driven by a grant or a funding source, and that the effort will be driven by whether there is a problem and how to solve it, by the best science and the ideas that come out of this group of people at these meetings.

Parajon also spoke about the looming timeline and said that staff “would like to move expeditiously but there’s not a clock on this.”

“That’s just a quick summary. So not driven by the grant, timing is flexible, no preconceived design that is done that we’re going to push today... This is all about what is the issue that needs to be solved, if there is one, how would we do that, and how much time does the community need to continue to digest it and absorb and discuss the pros and cons of it, and then how to do it properly,” Parajon said.

The SLAF grant will expire at the end of December unless City Council approves a plan that falls within the parameters of the original grant.

The no action/do nothing approach was presented first and upland stormwater BMPs. Bailey and Gillespie then presented on Taylor Run, in which they explained there needs to be the least impact possible to the remarkable environment.

“Whatever is done to Taylor Run should not be guided by the pursuit of Chesapeake Bay Pollution Reduction Credits,” Bailey said.

Both Bailey and Gillespie said they would like the projects to look at stormwater Best Management Practices in order to prevent large inflows of water before it gets to urban streams like Taylor Run.

“The problem is not in the stream – the problem is in the [upstream residential/urban] watershed,” Gillespie said.

Camille Liebnitzky, a city project engineer, gave a presentation about specific areas of concern in Taylor Run. She said that COVID-19 had put a damper on the community outreach and engagement efforts, so it was important to create these workshops now to create a community-based consensus.

Liebnitzky said the main areas of focus are public safety, protecting infrastructure, protecting natural resources and improving biodiversity in habitats. Each meeting attendee was given a handout that detailed specific conditions in Taylor Run.

Liebnitzky emphasized the exposed sanitary sewer line and the manhole in the middle of the stream in her presentation.

“Having all the eroded trees ... during high velocity storms, big volume storms, you’re going to see all of that wood push up against the pipe. That could lead to a pipe failure and sewer actually in our streams,” Liebnitzky said.

“That would definitely be a massive issue that we would want to cover.”

The manhole was another concern brought up by Liebnitzky. Moving it back further into the bank to stabilize it would ensure there would be no complications.

“We prefer to not have manholes in water areas because there could be leaks, there could be unknowns. ... We would prefer this to be further back in the bank for future resiliency of the infrastructure,” Liebnitzky said.

### Stream restoration alternatives

Goals and alternatives for the streams were discussed by John Field, Brandon Alderman and David Hirschman. There were six stream restoration alternatives presented in total: no action/do nothing, large wood, bioengineering, hard armor, minimal intervention and upland stormwater BMPs.

The no action/do nothing approach was presented first by Field.

“[The approach] may not be feasible for the entire length...”
of the streams, but is applicable where no infrastructure or private property is threatened and would allow the natural self-stabilization process to continue," Field said.

Field said it’s important to note that streams are always adjusting toward a stable condition, but the no action approach may not be feasible for the entirety of the stream in Taylor Run due to infrastructure like the exposed sanitary sewer line and manhole.

As for Strawberry Run, Field said there were only minor spot fixes needed, so the doing nothing approach could be an option in his opinion.

"Doing nothing strikes me as a particularly viable alternative now that we understand that the stream is working to stabilize itself," Field said.

Field then discussed the large wood alternative. This approach adds wood and speeds up the self-stabilization process that the stream is naturally trying to achieve.

According to the presentation handout from Field, "log jams across the channel could reduce erosive forces/stream energy and store sediment rather than transport downstream to Chesapeake Bay [so should be eligible for credits]."

These large wood alternatives like log jams can then be combined with bioengineering and hard armor techniques to protect important infrastructure. Adding large wood also naturally enhances the aquatic habitats in the streams.

Alderman then spoke about bioengineering, hard armor and minimal intervention approaches.

"Although these alternatives are presented as bioengineering, hard armor and minimal intervention, there’s characteristics of each one that can be mixed and matched. You can do bioengineering in one [place], and hard armor on another ... although that does kind of prolong the engineering design phase and the implementation ... and it may affect the cost a little bit, but they can be mixed and matched, and it’s not an all or nothing kind of approach," Alderman said.

Alderman described bioengineering as a technique that combines hard armor and vegetation to stabilize banks. Hard armor is a technique where banks are stabilized with non-erodible materials like rock or concrete. Lastly, minimal intervention is described as standard municipality utility repair that focuses on stabilizing infrastructure in place. Alderman explained all of these techniques are options for future design plans and gave some estimated costs associated with each.

Hirschman then spoke about upland stormwater BMPs. He explained how there were many types of BMPs used as voluntary retrofits or also could be required as part of new development or redevelopment. These are largely put in place to meet Chesapeake Bay TMDL pollutant load reductions, which the city is already planning to reach by 2028. BMPs can include anything from bioretention, tree planting, conservation landscaping, rainwater harvesting and retrofits of stormwater ponds and basins, according to Hirschman.

Hirschman also said the most important part of implementing these BMPs is being able to maintain them so they can continue their functionality over time.

"If we want to make good on our investment [implementing BMPs], local programs, state programs and private BMP owners have to be able to make the commitment," he said.

``I find it appalling that the city insists still on restoring Lucky Run using the same techniques that so clearly will harm Taylor and Strawberry. Lucky Run harbors lots of biodiversity that we need to preserve and protect as well."

Jesse Maines, chief of the Stormwater Management Division, said staff will continue to strive for a consensus solution that includes the community’s input for these streams.

“The next steps in the consensus building will be to hold additional individual workshops with the Taylor Run workgroup and the Strawberry Run workgroup, each workgroup being a subset of the larger Consensus Building Group. There will be one or two CBG meetings as well,” Maines said in a statement. “Members of the public may attend any of these meetings. Resident questions will be considered and addressed by the CBG during this process. Also, staff will post a portal for submitting resident questions on the consensus-building phase website for the CBG to consider.”

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**In Memoriam**

**Lee Roy Steele**

Lee Roy Steele
September 10, 1918 - September 13, 2011
Gone but not forgotten. He sleeps in Jesus.
Your loving wife,
Mrs. Shirley Ann Sanders Steele
Your son,
Robert Lee Steele
The City of Alexandria held a remembrance ceremony on Sunday at city hall in Market Square to commemorate the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001. The ceremony honored those who lost their lives, those who survived and those who risked or gave their lives while responding to the incident. Some of the attendees included Mayor Justin Wilson, Fire-EMS Chief Corey Smedley, Sheriff Sean Casey and Acting Assistant Chief of Police Dennis Andreas.
LEGISLATIVE

FROM

City Council's Tuesday legislative meeting.

son said. “If you think about the three-year cycle of the City Council, we spend the first year getting used to how you all work together ... and certainly the last year is dominated by elections unfortunately. So late first year, middle of the second year – that’s the meat of the council term. That’s when we do the big stuff, that’s when we do a lot of the heavy lifting.”

According to Wilson, this fall will include a full plate of projects. One particularly relevant topic is the Metro shutdown, which went into effect last weekend. Wilson said council will spend the next few months working through the impacts of the shutdown and managing the overall process as the city prepares to finally open the Potomac Yard Metro Station – a project that has been in talks for approximately 25 years, and should come to fruition around Thanksgiving.

Another item he anticipates council discussing is fair housing. The city partnered with several jurisdictions on a regional fair housing study, which is almost complete and will likely come before council with recommendations in the coming months.

“I suspect some of those are going to be pretty significant recommendations around how we make our housing access fair and equitable here in the community,” Wilson said.

The issue of land use, especially when it comes to the office market, is also something council will discuss in the coming months. The pandemic caused many people to start working remotely a few years ago, and Wilson said that conversations about how – or if – to transition back into offices began a few years ago and will continue into the future.

“The assumptions that people who have been working from home for the last two-and-a-half years are suddenly going to wake up and decide they want to be back in the office is pretty naive,” Wilson said. “… It’s not a new thing for us to put policies in place to try to help ease transition and ease conversion activity for land use. But I think that’s going to be something that continues to accelerate and going to have more urgency to it as we go forward.”

The city is planning to complete two collective bargaining agreements with the fire union and the police union – the first two in Virginia’s public sector since 1977. Once City Manager Jim Parajon reaches a tentative agreement with each party, the resolution will go to council for approval and final passage. Council will then engage the community in conversations about the potential costs of those agreements.

Additionally, City Council’s fall docket will include ongoing conversations with the School Board about capital and facilities, council’s own budget process and the future of bonus height in the city.

At Tuesday’s meeting, councilors discussed outcomes of the 2022 General Assembly session, one of which included granting permissive authority to the city for 15 laws in various subject areas.

Because Virginia is a “Dillon Rule” state, meaning the state does not recognize inherent local government powers, localities are limited to what the state statute expressly grants them. At the General Assembly’s most recent session, 15 bills were signed into law that give permissive – rather than mandatory – authority if the city so chooses to exercise it and implement the laws.

The newly approved laws relate to a number of topics like surplus revenues, tax rates, property tax, local volunteer credits, land preservation, solar photovoltaic projects, alarm systems, vehicle parking, cemetery registration, tree replacements and exhaust systems.

According to Sarah Taylor, the city’s legislative director, staff reviewed each individual...
Law and provided recommendations based on what they believe would best serve the community.

"[We looked] at these new opportunities for permissive authority, see what it would take to implement them, get staff input on the implementation impacts – whether this is something that would be valuable to the city, what the staff work would be required in order to implement it here in the community, whether it’s something we’ve asked for in the past, just give some context for what this permissive authority would be," Taylor said.

During discussion, Councilor Kirk McPike expressed support for HB 450/SB 278, which prohibits parking vehicles that are unable to receive an electric charge or that are not in the process of charging in spaces clearly reserved for charging electric vehicles. Violations are subject to civil penalties of up to $25.

“It’s not much, but the $25 fine … is something that we as a council would be interested in pursuing,” McPike said. “I think that is a real opportunity to … enact our priorities and state our values here.”

Other items were more vague. Councilor Alyia Gaskins, raised concerns with HB 907/SB 526, which would allow the city to require those with battery-charged fence security systems to obtain an alarm company permit and pay the corresponding fee. Localities would be able to inspect the security system and issue a citation warning and noncompliance penalty of up to $500.

Gaskins questioned whether other localities have taken advantage of this authority as well as which departments would be responsible for maintaining the registry and enforcing compliance.

Taylor responded that staff did not come with a specific actionable recommendation because they are still engaging in “ongoing conversations,” specifically related to code enforcements, fire marshals, the police department and potentially the Department of Community and Human Services. The goal, she said, is to know where the battery-operated fences are located to ensure there is an opportunity for quick emergency access. She said that to her knowledge, no one has taken advantage of this law yet.

“…I’m curious to learn more about it, but it seems like one where there’s a lot of nuances for.”

Councilor Sarah Bagley highlighted several items that reference budgetary impacts. She asked staff to clarify when exactly council would receive this information, noting that the budget retreat is set for November.

“I just wanted to express support for the indication that staff is going to evaluate the impacts of the surviving spouse tax issue … and I look forward to the recommendation,” Bagley said.

In response, Parajon said staff would not take action on any item unless council expresses interest in exploring, sharing, or reviewing it more deeply. Wilson added that certain items, such as tax-related laws, wouldn’t be able to go into effect until next budget year anyway, so a budget memo detailing the financial impact would suffice.

Council did not make any final decisions on the 15 new laws; they will instead review the information and direct staff at a later date.

“This was our effort to give you all the information you need to take back and digest and then come back to staff as a body with specific actionable direction on the ones you would like us to take advantage of and move forward either on the policy change, or make sure it’s built into the budget process, or direct us to draft an ordinance when an ordinance is required,” Taylor said.

Council will meet next on Saturday for the first 2022-23 public hearing.
School Board approves 2022-23 areas of focus

Students support recently removed Lunch & Learn program
BY KASSIDY MCDONALD

One month into the 2022-23 school year, the Alexandria School Board approved its areas of focus for the current year at its Sept. 8 meeting, which was the first with Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D. serving as interim superintendent.

Areas of focus included improving teacher morale, mental health concerns and absenteeism of both students and staff. During the open comment period of the meeting, Alexandria City High School students also expressed a desire to return to an extended lunch option, called Lunch & Learn, which was removed for this year because of safety reasons. An ACHS student was fatally stabbed in May during a melee at Bradlee Shopping Center, in which students were off-campus, in violation of school policy, during school hours.

Clinton Page, Alexandria City Public Schools chief of accountability and research, gave an overview presentation of the drafted proposed areas of focus for the 2022-2023 school year.

"Everything we do within Alexandria City Public is grounded in our Strategic Plan: Equity for All 2025," Page said.

He then went on to discuss the 2021-2022 National Educational Landscape, in which data from across the nation shows that students and school staff struggle with mental health challenges, increases in student externalizing behaviors, increased absences which result in lost instructional time and difficulty finding substitute teachers.

This data also detailed research from Auburn University that showed increases in low teacher morale at 54%, and almost three out of four teachers reported they have considered leaving teaching at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

ACPS data shows that chronic absenteeism is a problem within the school system, with rates nearly doubling for most student subgroups from 2019-2021 and remaining high in 2022. Staff absenteeism was also higher in 2021-2022 than in pre-pandemic school years.

Kay-Wyatt then gave board members an overview of where the areas of focus would be for this school year. Those included:

- Social emotional and academic learning recovery;
- Academic enrichment and advancement for Hispanic males, including internships, externships and workforce opportunities;
- Staff wellness and growth, including a wellness program, career growth and pipeline opportunities;
- Middle school educational experience, including scheduling, math pathways and middle school transitions;
- Early college, including course sequencing and program development;
- Talented and gifted students, including the identification process and service model.

"[Many additional] items will come up in our department improvement plans as well as our school improvement plans. And those school improvement plans will drill down information for specific community school data. That’s why these are more broad, in a sense that it covers the entire division, but remember we do have division improvement plans as well as school improvement plans," Kay-Wyatt explained.

Another proposed area of focus was the continuous improvement in Key Performance Indicator disparities, to which Kay-Wyatt said staff is giving “laser focus.” These disparities, which the Board discussed in greater detail during its work session, were the suspensions of Black male and female students as well as Hispanic male students. There was also a disparity in chronic absenteeism for both Hispanic and Black students. This was the only change that came out of the work session from the previous presentation of areas of focus for 2022-2023.

The meeting began with numerous ACPS students speaking about their first week of classes, and expressing their support to bring Lunch & Learn, a recently removed program, back to ACHS.

The students all expressed their understanding that the program was removed for security reasons, but they also emphasized the positive aspects of the program.

The four students who spoke during public comment all had positive things to say about the program, such as that it provided a “brain break.”

ACHS senior Alayit Berhanu said the program strengthened many important aspects of a high schooler’s life, such as friendships, academics and freedom.

“The way Lunch & Learn was set up allowed students to communicate with their friends for 74 minutes, and us students enjoyed it tremendously,” Berhanu said. “... The positive aspects outweigh the negative aspects.”

Another ACHS senior, Lenhile Vilakati, said she couldn’t go to the College and Career Center anymore because 30 minutes during lunch is
Out of the classroom

Education section

ILS commits to student service

Immanuel Lutheran School kicked off the new school year on Sept. 6.

ILS believes that a great education imparts knowledge and virtue and that a fully formed person will be skilled to use their knowledge well and wisely. As a part of ILS’ commitment to training wise and virtuous students, students are encouraged daily to find opportunities to love and serve their neighbors.

In the fifth through eighth grades, additional formal opportunities are provided for students to engage in service within the school community throughout the school year. This includes serving as elected House captains as part of ILS’ House Team system, volunteering for morning and afternoon patrol, assisting younger students as Chapel helpers and representing the school as a part of the student ambassador program.

Student ambassadors are seventh and eighth grade students who demonstrate a spirit of service without the need for recognition, and a deep love for the ILS community and mission. They are leaders with their peers and serve as role models for younger students.

In addition to these and other service opportunities throughout the year, the entire ILS community will again partner with other organizations within our community.

Browne Academy students recognize honor code

At the beginning of the school year, Browne Academy’s middle school students and faculty met to discuss the school’s honor code and core values.

They discussed the school’s honor code and the importance of living by the school’s core values of excellence, diversity, character and community, both on and off-campus. At the end of the assembly, all middle school students and faculty signed an agreement confirming their adherence to these guiding principles.

Each student also filled out a card, selecting the core value that resonates the most with them and explaining why. The agreement and student cards will be displayed prominently in Browne’s middle school building for the entire school year.
Fusion Alexandria kicked off the new school year with a social outing for middle and high school students. The first field trip of the year saw students and staff head to an afternoon showing of "Minions: The Rise of Gru" at a local theater. The visit was an opportunity for new and returning students to bond, offering an opportunity for social bonding beyond the classroom.

Outdoor adventures at ACDS

As most area students were walking into classrooms for the first day of school, Alexandria Country Day School’s sixth, seventh and eighth graders headed out of town for overnight trips. Students tackled a high ropes course, went white-water rafting, learned outdoor survival skills and participated in other activities designed to build leadership and interpersonal skills.

Starting the school year with these outdoor, overnight trips allow students time to develop more positive and long lasting relationships. Students who are new to ACDS also find the trips to be a great way to get to know their classmates and quickly become an integral member of the group.

Fusion heads to the movies

Fusion Alexandria kicked off the new school year with a social outing for middle and high school students. The first field trip of the year saw students and staff head to an afternoon showing of "Minions: The Rise of Gru" at a local theater. The visit was an opportunity for new and returning students to bond, offering an opportunity for social bonding beyond the classroom.

School Profile

Washington Street United Methodist Church Preschool

Washington Street United Methodist Church Preschool was established in 1991 as a ministry of the church, serving children 2 and a half to 5 years of age. Small class sizes and experienced, loving teachers enable Washington Street Preschool to maintain an environment where children feel welcome to explore and learn at their own pace. Washington Street encourages learning through play, which enables children to develop higher level thinking, strengthen language and social skills, cultivate empathy and make sense of their world.

Using educational themes allows teachers at Washington Street to convey subject matter in a concrete and creative manner in order to make each child’s experience in school fun, interesting and growth-providing. By scaffolding exploration and providing a variety of experiences, children become lifelong thinkers and learners.

Special attention is given to each child’s abilities and interests, using his or her strengths to foster development in all areas. Through art, music, drama and play, children enrolled in the preschool are encouraged to expand their imaginations, develop confidence in their abilities and build a strong self-image.

A developmentally appropriate program enables teachers to incorporate language experiences daily, allowing children to grow their vocabulary naturally. A balanced schedule is achieved through focused activities such as meeting time, table activities and story time; it is followed by opportunities for exploration during art projects, water and sand table activities, block play, music and movement, science-centered activities and dramatic play.

Washington Street extends student learning beyond the preschool walls by bringing community programs into the school, including science, storytelling and music. A popular tradition at the preschool is a chick hatching program which brings farm life into the classroom. Students watch over chicken eggs as they develop in an incubator. The wonder and awe expressed on the faces of children as they witness a baby chick hatch affirms the importance of what a preschool experience can provide.

"This is advertorial content."
‘If I were the teacher’

If I were the teacher, I’d be cool as a cucumber! I’d build a pool so we could get on a floaty and do math. I’d give plenty of breaks for fun and activities. I’d have math speed rounds with plenty of prizes like stuffed animals and toys. Our field trips would be around the globe while we collected snow globes. As you can tell, it would be a blast if I were your teacher mainly because we’d get to take a blast to the past!

Well there you go. Maybe you should start thinking about going back to school!

-Joshua, 11

If I were the teacher I would let students have recess all day because they deserve it in a way. The students get to choose what classes they do to art all day or surfing on a bay. I would fill the library shelves with comics and novels. Students get to choose what they get for lunch.

- Henry, 10

If I were the teacher I would theme my room around animals. I would have a corner of my room dedicated to reading. There would be fun bean bag chairs, and the bookshelves would have different animals on them. The desks would be placed in the middle of the room, but slightly staggered so everyone could see. All of the desks would face the front wall which the smartboard would be on. I would have a selection of seats. My students would get to choose between chairs, wobbly stools, and chairs with bean bags on them. I would be a nice teacher, but I would make sure my students learned.

- Emily, 10

If I were a teacher, I would go about, telling stories, of the great drought. History and animals would be my thing. I hope the kids would not think of it as boring. Whenever a holiday would come, I would hear a thrum, thrum, thrum. For across the hall, the music teacher was having a ball. The children would dance, sing, and shout, hopefully they wouldn’t let the wild things out. Down the stairs, and through the door, the librarian was about to roar!

She tore through the rows of books, and books, knocking down piles, wherever she looked! It was my duty, I realized, to make this school what I often saw idolized. The horror was climbing quicker than I had thought. I looked at the book that I had brought. An idea struck me, and I threw it down, down, down. I was able to tuck my hands over my ears, as the scene revealed nicer than it had appeared. The ball continued, the students not bored, and the librarian back, with her hoard.

- Heather, 10

If I were the teacher I would make the desks as low as they could go, but I wouldn’t want to sit on the floor or a board, so I’d make them higher so I don’t get fired. Let’s hope my students don’t get tired.

If I were the teacher I would make the class neater, so I’d add a heater!

- Mikey, 10

If I were the teacher, Support would flow out of me like a river

If I were the teacher, My job would bring me all the joy in the world

If I were the teacher, My love for my students would be more numerous than the stars in the sky

If I were the teacher, I would treat all students and people equally

If I were the teacher, I would help my students be themselves and not force them to be someone they were not

But I’m not the teacher, and I cannot control, How my teacher treats me and the world

Yet I hope the perfect teacher will emerge like the sun on a rainy day, And create a rainbow of happiness

- Caroline, 10

If I were the teacher we would have a bunny for a class pet. I would also let the students have stuffed animals on their desks. I would have a huge corner with bean bag chairs and a wall full of books. Every day a dog would run around the room and the kids would play with it. Everyday we would move all the desks to the side so we could watch a movie. And homework would be playing with a new toy they got that day. They can
**SEPTEMBER 16**

**AFTER SCHOOL ARTISTS** Create your own laminated sticker bookmark at the James M. Duncan Jr. Branch Library. All supplies will be provided.

**Time:** 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** 2501 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** [https://alexlibraryva.org/event/7097094](https://alexlibraryva.org/event/7097094)

**SEPTEMBER 19**

**PAWS TO READ** Call the Children's desk, 703-746-1783, to register your rising first to sixth grader to read to a dog. There are three 15 minute time slots available, and it is first come first serve if you don't call ahead.

**Time:** 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** 2501 Commonwealth Ave.

**Information:** [https://alexlibraryva.org/event/7192101](https://alexlibraryva.org/event/7192101)

**‘TEACHER’**

All to my classroom
Where knowledge is shared

In the classroom, where I the teacher stand

Plants on a shelf
Potted by soil

Graphite on paper
Gray shaded landscapes

A clicking keyboard
A quick foreword

A lecture by me
Where the linguistic poet stands

-Erin, 10

Poets
A pencil in hand
A blowing fan

The mid-autumn heat
The rushing feet

-Maddie, 10

The writers are fifth grade students at Grace Episcopal School.

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**WORD SEARCH**

**BACK TO SCHOOL**

```plaintext
LYG MZ GHT KHPYL CIZNUW
GSAW RBBV REAX WRNHTAM
OTNA GyO ALTLR UOMOMJL
RXDAJ WVKQGEI QITES TH
FEPIEULTTPTGTWSFHZ
PIGRWRQVNAIGYAGUIS
ZSOAQENTJDUOCYLVHC
SHQLUSHPYULGIUGOH EI
FBEHGMCCAXHDTGDKE
WACAILNATITWELBAN
EQRUAACADEMICSLBEFC
RRPNTKXNLQJTJCPBERTE
SUBVSJWYRHSILGNEMIK
```

**ACADEMICS**  **GRADE**  **LANGUAGE**  **SCIENCE**

**ART**  **GRADUATE**  **LEARN**  **TEACHER**

**EDUCATION**  **HISTORY**  **MATH**  **TEST**

**ENGLISH**  **HOMEWORK**  **READING**  **WRITING**

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Using movement to transform learning so all students have the tools they need to reach their highest potential.

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[move2learn.org](http://move2learn.org)

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**MOVE2LEARN KIDS**

[move2learnkids](http://move2learnkids)
Systemic Alignment

The areas of focus this year are a part of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

SCHOOL BOARD FROM 13

not enough time to eat and go places.

“I’m asking you to reconsider for those of us who can’t stay after school and for those of us who have excelled with Lunch & Learn,” Vilakati said.

Chelsea Waruzi, another ACHS senior, lost her voice and had a friend speak for her during public comment. She said she was able to be in many clubs and extracurriculars because of Lunch & Learn.

“Lunch & Learn can allow me to reach out and get help. I would be able to go to the College and Career Center to get help with college-related things. I can go to my teachers for extra help on assignments, or go to my counselor about how overwhelming being a senior is, all while having enough time after school to make sure my sister does her homework, my brother showers, do my assignments, eat dinner and go to sleep on time,” Waruzi said.

“Lunch & Learn is pivotal to my success as a student.”

ACHS junior Yahney Marie Sangare, a Lunch Committee member, echoed the same concerns about the lack of opportunities for students with the removal of the program.

“When we discuss finding solutions, are we looking at the central problem? Is taking away Lunch & Learn, a fundamental program that allowed for students to come from a variety of different circumstances to come together in networks that facilitated the positive environment we are seeking … is the constant vilification and occasional dehumanization of students, especially students of color … are we making the moves to help these student needs or only trying to minimize certain concerns?” Sangare said.

She then urged the Board to adopt a new program that will serve all students’ needs as well as to include students in subsequent conversations about the topic.

School Board Member Michelle Rief said she was glad improving KPI disparities was included in the areas of focus. Rief also asked about the future of Lunch & Learn, referencing the many student speakers who said it supported their academic recovery.

Kay-Wyatt said the number of students, family and faculty members that have reached out to her about the program shows how important it is within the ACPS community.

“Please understand it is a reset for us as we enter the new school year … it is really to step back and get more input on how we can help students and really facilitate the time around safety, learning and providing SEAL activities in addition to that,” Kay-Wyatt said. “We do understand everyone’s concerns that they shared about making sure we have opportunities for our students … and I think that committee is really going to come back with some great feedback for us on how we can make enhancements for what [students] had for last year.”

The committee working on Lunch & Learn involves about 15 members, including student representatives, who are brainstorming ideas to keep a program like Lunch & Learn as an option for ACPS students.

Board Member Willie Bailey made a motion to approve the areas of focus for the 2022-2023 school year, which Board Member W. Christopher Harris seconded. The Board voted and approved it unanimously, 8-0, with Alderton absent.

-kmcdonald@alextimes.com
City hosts second annual event for elderly residents
BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

As a young boy, Walter Hammersley delivered newspapers across the City of Alexandria. He would ride his bike up and down King Street, stop by the city jail and visit the old Torpedo Factory all as part of his route. But that was more than 90 years ago; recently, the longtime resident celebrated his 100th birthday.

During his lifetime, Hammersley enlisted in the Navy during World War II, worked for the railroad, developed a career as a mortgage banker and devoted time to the Alexandria Boys Club sports leagues. A true city native, Hammersley has quite literally watched Alexandria change over the years.

“Now I don’t see the stores where I used to get my clothes,” Hammersley said. “The barbershop where I used to get my hair cut – all of those are gone and everything is big now.”

Hammersley, who grew up on Payne Street, is one of 13 residents whose lives and stories were honored at the city’s second annual centenarian celebration on Tuesday evening. Held at the Vola Lawson Lobby in city hall, the gathering included honorees, family and community members coming together to celebrate the city residents who are 100 years and older.

The city’s first centenarian event took place last year virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making this year the first ever in-person celebration. According to Mary Lee Anderson, executive director of Senior Services of Alexandria, the project was a labor of love.

“It’s a real group effort. All these different city departments and our nonprofit [are] coming together to celebrate some really special people,” Anderson said.

The concept came about last year when Mayor Justin Wilson approached Anderson about emulating in the city a program he heard about in Southern Virginia that honored centenarians.

Anderson subsequently reached out to the Division of Aging and the Successful Aging Committee, who agreed to help turn the idea into reality. Last year’s event featured a PowerPoint presentation as well as a certificate and coin for each honoree. This year, since in-person events were allowed, staff decided to throw a real party.

Tuesday’s bash included 13 giant birthday cards for guests to sign, each with a photo and short bio of the honoree for whom it represented. There was also an opportunity for centenarians to sign up for an oral history recording with the Office of Historic Alexandria’s new Oral History Center in order to preserve their memories.

“All the people involved are serving older adults in our community and we know how important it is to honor their lives, and how much they’ve given to others – their families, the community, everyone that they’re in contact with. We need to honor our elders and respect them, and this is a really fun way to do it,” Anderson said.

Kate Garvey, director of the Department of Community and Human Services, kicked off the evening by expressing gratitude to the city for prioritizing, valuing and supporting the health and safety of Alexandria’s older residents.

“It’s really important for us to take time to reflect on the lives of the people we’re with today. It’s really important for us to understand what it takes to live successfully, and when

PHOTO/OLIVIA ANDERSON

The City of Alexandria held its second annual centenarian celebration on Tuesday at city hall.
you look at the advice the centenarians have given us, it is so valuable,” Garvey said.

Each birthday card bio offered life tips, some of which were to “do what your family tells you;” “make the best out of every situation;” “look for understanding and compromise;” and to have “curiosity about the world and other people, as well as healthy eating habits and exercise.”

The evening concluded with a musical performance by the Alexandria Citizens Band, and congratulatory remarks, presentations and distribution of certificates by Wilson for the centenarians in attendance. Although 13 centenarians submitted applications, four made it to the event.

Along with Hammersley, they were Anita Du Mars, 101, Phillip Melville, 100, and Frances Webb, 102.

Du Mars grew up in Luxembourg, where she met her husband David, who fought in Normandy, Germany and the Battle of the Bulge. She came to the United States with 350 other WWII brides and speaks five languages, including Luxembourgish, French, German, English and Spanish.

Melville was born in Paris, France and moved during WWII to Albuquerque, New Mexico as a teenager. He worked as a civil engineer for the Virginia Department of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Civil Aviation Administration.

Webb, who was the oldest of five children, helped watch her siblings after her father passed away. She worked at the South Carolina Navy Yard as a welder and was married to her husband for more than 50 years.

“It’s all right here; four people who can really walk us through amazing things about Alexandria,” Garvey said. Other registered centenarians who were not in attendance included Andrey Fenton, 100, Lowell Fisher, 100, Marilyn McLean, 100, Jane Sara, 102, Alice Schmidt, 102, Catherine Sevick, 105, Virginia Sahaj, 102, Miriam Wiener, 100 and Mildred Youso, 101. Some city centenarians were not registered, including Charlotte Olson, who turned 100 in February.

During his remarks, Wilson said the event was intended to celebrate an important milestone and shed light on the legacy each centenarian has built in the community.

“These are the folks who have given back to our community for a generation, a lifetime, and have embodied resilience, embodied self possession, as well as generosity,” Wilson said. “These are folks who have given back in so many different ways to our community – in little and large ways – and have made their mark on this city.”

“The fact that they are here today telling us [their] stories, teaching us, is such a pleasure for all of us and such a miracle,” he added.

Hammersley’s overarching feelings about becoming a centenarian were certain and succinct.

“I’m pleased to be 100,” Hammersley said. “I’m very glad to be here.”

-oanderson@alextimes.com

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BY FRANCESCO DE SALVATORE

The Office of Historic Alexandria – which is the department of city government charged with the conservation, interpretation and promotion of Alexandria’s past – has announced its newest program, The Alexandria Oral History Center. The center is a community-driven collaboration to document and preserve the memories and stories of Alexandria. The Center provides residents with oral history trainings and resources to conduct oral history interviews and community history projects. Additionally, the center maintains a public archive to preserve oral histories for future generations. The center also deepens the public’s engagement and understanding of Alexandria’s past and present by producing public programs and resources with the oral history archive.

The center welcomes all residents of Alexandria to book an appointment with the manager and record their own oral histories. Following the recording, participants are provided with a copy of their oral history recording and a written transcript of the recording. Participants can also choose to have their oral histories included in the Oral History Archive, where it will be made available to the public and preserved for future generations.

Throughout the year, the center will work on specific initiatives and projects about various topics and themes. One of the most recent projects the center is working on is National Centenarian Day on Sept. 22. The center is partnering with the Successful Aging Committee to provide Alexandrian centenarians and their families the opportunity to record and preserve their oral histories.

Residents who are interested in facilitating their own oral histories are invited to book an appointment with the manager.
The StoryKit Program provided by the Oral History Center trains and supports participants to serve as oral historians and create their own oral history projects.

**ORAL HISTORY**  | 21

**FROM**

participate in its StoryKit Program. The StoryKit Program trains and supports participants to serve as oral historians and create their own oral history projects. Additionally, the center lends recording equipment to participants in order to complete their oral history recordings. Participants can choose to record stories about any given topic and/or historical moment.

The center is also working on producing various public programs. In 2023, it will launch a Listening Room series, which will include four public events throughout the year. Each public event in the Listening Room series will focus on a specific topic and theme, and present edited oral stories to a public audience and a facilitated discussion. The first event of the Listening Room series will be in winter of 2023, and it will focus on stories about immigration in Alexandria.

Alexandrian centenarians and their families are encouraged to sign-up for an oral history recording by contacting 703-746-4821 or francesco.desalvator@alexandriava.gov. Residents are also welcome to reach out about recording other oral histories and/or how to participate in the StoryKit Program. For more information about the Alexandria Oral History Center and to stay up to date on the center’s programs and events, visit https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-alexandria/program/the-alexandria-oral-history-center.

The writer is oral history manager of the Office of Historic Alexandria.
Lawrence “Lucky” Elliott was a mentor to Alexandria youth
BY CHAR MCCARGO BAH

It was 1962 when Lawrence “Lucky” Elliott, who wore basketball jersey number 11, graduated from Parker-Gray High School. He enrolled in Northern Virginia Community College to study Parks and Recreation Management.

In 1965, Elliott landed a part-time job with the City of Alexandria as a recreation leader. This was the beginning of a long full-time career in the Alexandria Recreation Department. He supervised kids in boxing, basketball, football, track and field and even the females in the cheerleading competitions. These activities kept many children out of trouble and off the streets.

In the 1970s, the City of Alexandria had a serious drug problem. Lucky by that time was a full-time employee, the Youth Sports Supervisor, at the Charles Houston Recreation Center. He used his position to get kids off the street by recruiting them to learn and play sports. He applied strict rules that the kids had to follow and he enforced disciplinary actions when it was necessary. Many of those children had never had the opportunity to play on a team. Lucky was not just their coach; he became a trusted friend and a father figure for the Alexandria African American youth of the 1970s through 1990s.

One of Lucky’s assistant coaches, Aaron Banks, said “Lucky was a role model for so many of the youth at Charles Houston Recreation Center. He would do everything he could to keep his kids in line.”

Banks also stated that one of Lucky’s kids, Carl Carr, made it into the NFL. Carr attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Craig Harris, another one of his kids, played basketball in Lucky’s program at Charles Houston Recreation Center. In 1977, he represented T.C. Williams in the McDonald’s Capital Classic game where he played against Magic Johnson and Gene Banks and received the game’s Most Valuable Player award. After graduating from high school, Harris attended Tulane University.

In addition, five of Lucky’s kids played basketball for T.C. Williams in a state championship game.

Another one of Lucky’s kids was Rev. Jasper Lee McCargo, Sr., who remembers Lucky being a stern and no-nonsense coach.

“[Lucky] also taught us our culture and he was serious about us winning. He taught us a song, ‘We Are the Mighty, Mighty Houston,’ he helped boys become men,” McCargo said.

Many of Lucky’s kids became successful in life. They became educated and had good careers. Anthony Gray, a finance entrepreneur, is another one of Lucky’s kids.

“Playing for Charles Houston Recreation was the best time of my life. Majority of my friends have been through Lucky’s program at Charles Houston. When I was growing up everyone wanted to play for Charles Houston Recreation Center,” Gray said.

On Sept. 4, more than 250 people attended the annual Charles Houston Youth Sports Reunion Cookout in honor of Lucky. Although his former kids are now in their 50s and 60s, Lucky still considers them his kids. Several years ago, Lucky got together with some of the people who were in his Recreation Center program to discuss having an annual Youth Sports Reunion Cookout. For five years, the alumni of the Charles Houston Youth Sports have attended the Reunion Cookouts, missing only two out of the five years because of the pandemic.

Lucky was born as Lawrence Elliott in Alexandria. He was raised in the neighborhood called The Berg.” He found his calling early in life and was able to make a difference in many lives.

Lucky was lucky, because he gave children a reason to hope and shoot for the stars. These kids became the “Mighty, Mighty Houston” and they developed into successful individuals because one man was determined to keep them off the streets and give them a direction for success. They became a family. Those children were able to see how setting a goal helps one succeed in life. They continued to carry that same discipline throughout life.

Lucky was lucky indeed because he bet on his kids and they did not let him down. Every Sports Reunion Cookout that is given, his kids will be there to honor the man who believed in them.

The writer is a published author, freelance writer, independent historian, investigative/genealogist researcher and a Living Legend of Alexandria. Her blog is http://www.theotheralexandria.com.
Elevating the exterior

High-ROI home upgrades to improve curb appeal
BY FAMILY FEATURES

Your home’s exterior can say a lot about you and your family while also making a first impression on guests – and future potential buyers. Because of the impact curb appeal has on the amount prospective buyers are willing to spend on a home, it’s important for homeowners to look beyond simply choosing the right siding color, and consider different siding materials and profiles, adding accents like stone veneer and researching other exterior upgrades that can both increase beauty and deliver performance over time.

In fact, exterior remodeling projects typically top the list of projects that add the most resale value to homes. According to Remodeling’s 2022 Cost vs. Value Report, nine of the top 10 projects delivering the best return on cost were exterior renovations.

If you’re looking to sell or just want to increase the overall value of your home, consider these high-ROI exterior upgrades that can improve aesthetics and increase resale value.

Front door
If replacing the front door isn’t necessary, adding a fresh coat of paint is a simple way to refresh your home’s exterior. You can take your “dated” door and make it modern again with a bold, on-trend color. Take it one step further by adding artistic house numbers, a new light fixture or a door knocker in an unexpected shape for inexpensive ways to add style.

Vinyl siding
Updating your home’s exterior with vinyl siding yields a 67.2% return upon sale, according to the report. When considering new siding, look for high-quality, low-maintenance materials. Depending on where you live, insulated vinyl siding can add additional protection against the elements, as well as increased energy efficiency. While function is important, don’t be afraid to make bold choices with color, texture, different profiles and contrasting trim to make a statement with your home’s exterior.

Shutters
Adding or replacing shutters is another easy way to add a bit of flair and can be a key finishing touch in creating the perfect exterior. With the potential to play beautifully alongside windows and siding as well as with the architectural style and surrounding landscaping, it’s important to make thoughtful choices and install shutters properly to ensure they look and function as designed.

Composite decking
Another exterior remodeling project with a high ROI, (62.1%), according to the report, is replacing your home’s existing wood deck with com-

Make your “dated” door modern again with a bold, on-trend color.
Composite decking. Decking combines the natural beauty and warmth of exotic hardwood with the durability and low-maintenance requirements of cellular polyvinyl chloride, which resists stains, scratches, fading and moisture, for a deck that will last for years with minimal upkeep.

Column wraps
Give your front porch an instant facelift by wrapping your existing columns with PVC wraps. This is an easy way to achieve a cleaner and more modern, updated look. Resistant to moisture, PVC column wraps prevent issues found in traditional wood columns, such as warping, rotting and insect damage. Available in a variety of ready-to-install styles, they can also be painted to complement your home's exterior color palette.

Adding or replacing shutters can add a bit of flair and be a key finishing touch in creating the perfect exterior.

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HOME OF THE WEEK

Expansive Rivergate model in Old Town

Enjoy watching the crew teams and sailboats glide by your Rivergate waterside home – so serene and peaceful!

The "Snowden" model is the largest model in Rivergate. The main level offers a marble tiled foyer, living room with a gas fireplace and built-ins, dining room and family room with electric fireplaces and kitchen with natural cherry cabinetry and granite countertops.

The main and upper levels feature gleaming hardwood floors. The gated patio can be accessed from the family room. Large windows in both the kitchen and family rooms as well as the primary bedroom offer wide views of the Potomac River and the park. On the upper level is the primary bedroom with soaring cathedral ceilings, sitting area with a gas fireplace and french doors with river views.

The ensuite bathroom offers a double vanity, soaking tub and separate shower. There is a walk-in closet and additional closet space. A second bedroom and additional full bathroom plus convenient laundry are also located on this level. The upper level offers a third bedroom with light filled cathedral ceilings, full bathroom, storage room and a large cedar lined closet. The lower level recreation room features a wall of beautiful custom built cabinetry containing the television and two single pull down beds. It is a perfect room for relaxing and having additional house guests, complete with an adjoining full bathroom. The double car garage is accessed from this level. This dream home is minutes to Harris Teeter, Sport & Health, Trader Joe's, Café 44 and many other restaurants and shops.
Our View

A little late

It was startling to learn at the Sept. 8 School Board meeting that Alexandria City Public Schools had not yet decided on its areas of focus for the 2022-23 school year almost three weeks into that year.

This news was almost as shocking as a proposal at its prior meeting in August to change the way teachers approach homework – four days after the start of the school year.

Successful organizations plan well ahead to approve changes and establish priorities. That our educational leaders – the recommendations in both cases came from ACPS staff or consultants – would propose major changes and the School Board only be approving priorities after classes began speaks to the dysfunction of the system.

Several significant concerns were raised at the Sept. 8 meeting, including:

- Low teacher morale and struggles with mental health;
- Rising absenteeism of both students and teachers; and
- How to design and enforce lunch policies at Alexandria City High School that enable students to utilize extended time while also avoiding safety issues that happened during the prior Lunch & Learn program.

These are all serious topics. They are all concerns in need of good solutions that work. But how can they possibly be priorities for the school year already underway if they haven’t been examined and solutions proposed prior to the start of this year?

Teachers spend weeks during the summer preparing for the upcoming school year. The time for the School Board to approve priorities for the coming school year would be right after the prior year ends, not after the new one has begun, so new solutions can be planned for and implemented.

We are a data-driven city, and recent data clearly shows that Alexandria is having a difficult time retaining teachers and hiring new ones. ACPS scores on Standards of Learning tests are also disturbingly lower than statewide averages.

Setting priorities for a school year after that year has already begun is one clue as to how we got to this point.

A shoutout to centenarians

Alexandria’s new annual event celebrating centenarians in the city is a terrific addition to the excellent senior services in our city.

Kudos to Mayor Justin Wilson for suggesting the idea, and for the city’s senior services leaders for acting on it. Those of us who are younger get so busy living our lives – working our jobs and dealing with kids and hectic schedules – that it’s easy to forget about the city’s older residents, many of whom have lived fascinating lives but are no longer particularly visible.

This annual celebration is a wonderful way to recognize them and their many contributions to life in our city and in other places they may have lived.

Alexandria is becoming a hub for excellent senior living facilities, as new, first-rate living communities have sprung up throughout the city in recent years, joining others that have been here for years.

Our city has made its seniors a priority, as is apparent from our many senior programs, which include free rides for seniors to delivery of Meals on Wheels to senior day programs.

Recognizing those seniors who make it to the 100-year milestone with an annual celebration is a terrific way to honor their lives.

Opinion

“Where the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe.”

- Thomas Jefferson

Photo of the Week

An Alexandria home flies the Union Jack to honor the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Your Views

A shoutout for our Constitution

To the editor:

Saturday is Constitution Day. In 1787, the states ratified the U.S. Constitution, establishing a democratic republic. Throughout our history, the Constitution through the amendment process has served as a vehicle to ensure our civil rights. Constitutional amendments that were used to reverse Supreme Court rulings included banning slavery, giving women and 18-year-olds the right to vote and allowing the popular election of U.S. Senators.

Yet, despite having gained our independence from overseas tyranny, our very form of government is now being threatened from within. The right of citizens to be heard in elections is being challenged by the untethered influence of unlimited amounts of money in our elections. Although the Constitution guarantees equal representation, today, our leaders are being chosen by an elite few: billionaires, global corporations, the biggest unions and special interests and even foreign governments. All these entities now dominate our political system and drown out the voices of everyday Americans.

There is a solution. The passage of the For our Freedom Constitutional Amendment is the key to fixing a broken system that makes high-dollar donors more powerful than every other American. It offers a lasting, constitutional solution to protect free speech and the equal right of every American to representation and a vote that counts. It will ensure that we the people have an equal say in who governs our nation and the laws being passed. It will end the domination of our elections and corruption of our representative government by dark money and elite donors.

Only by regaining the voters’ influence in making the laws under which we live can we be confident that we have a government that is in President Lincoln’s words, “of the people, by the people, for the people.”

-Nancy Morgan, Alexandria

The opinions expressed in letters and columns are those of the writers only and do not reflect the views, nor receive the endorsement, of the Alexandria Times.
My View | Bill Rossello

‘No’ to grant-driven planning

BY BILL ROSSELLO

When a city government settles on a solution before it defines the problem, it usually means they are on the path to a policy misstep. When it consumes $87 million of state grant money, it may turn into a major policy disaster. But that’s exactly the path that city hall has chosen with the proposed overhaul of the Duke Street corridor.

Duke Street is the busiest east/west arterial road in the city, carrying between 30,000 and 55,000 motor vehicles daily between I-395 and Telegraph Road. It is the supply route servicing scores of local businesses and the only route for trucks that need to access some of the city’s key industrial zones. In other words, Duke Street may be the most critical arterial road in Alexandria.

Yet, the city is rushing to transform it despite any significant community support. An advisory committee to City Council will soon review alternative designs for dedicated bus and bicycle lanes. Those changes promise to eliminate motor vehicle lanes and valued frontage roads on which several residential neighborhoods depend, while fundamentally hindering mobility for most of the approximately 43,000 city residents that live along that corridor.

Such a transformation of Duke Street would inevitably lead to neighborhood safety and parking challenges, and much slower trips to work, the grocery store, school and the doctor’s office. It would also promise greater congestion and severe limits on left-hand turns, particularly into neighborhoods for the 97% of road users who are likely to continue using their cars on Duke Street.

City staff’s favored design concept is called Bus Rapid Transit. Not new nationally or in Alexandria, it is controversial. The $42 million Metroway, known to most of us as the dedicated bus lane that runs down the middle of Route 1 at Potomac Yards, has had low ridership since it opened in 2014. Many in Arlington and Alexandria believe it costs too much to deliver too little value to too few. That seems to be the likely outcome of the Duke Street project as well.

The rush to completely overhaul Duke Street is also fraught with process problems. Among them, the city has not defined what problem BRT will solve for the community. A survey of residents performed by external consultants revealed that Duke Street users are concerned primarily with congestion, which is particularly acute between Quaker Lane and Telegraph Road. The second biggest concern is safety. Reduced bus travel time was not emphasized by respondents, not even those who are regular bus riders.

More troubling is that no one at city hall seems to know the travel patterns of West End residents. They assume that a large proportion of them travel regularly from west of Quaker Lane to Old Town, but they have no evidence to support that notion.

All this to help an average of approximately 1,500 weekday bus riders – accounting for about 3,000 daily rides – save a few minutes making their way from one end of the city to the other. The cost equates to nearly $60,000 of taxpayer investment for each rider. And that does not include the inevitable increase in annual city maintenance costs.

My View | Melanie Kay-Wyatt, Ed.D.

Falling back into learning

BY MELANIE KAY-WYATT, ED.D.

The doors have opened on the 2022-23 academic year in Alexandria City Public Schools, and they are filled with hope and promise of new achievements for our students and the school community. It has been exciting to usher in a new school year as I take on the role of interim superintendent this month, after having served as the ACPS chief of human resources. As a long-time educator, I can assure our families that addressing the needs of all of our students is of the utmost importance.

Thankfully, as our students and staff return to school this year, COVID-19 is being managed with a vaccine now available for all school-age children and testing that is readily available. Of course, our vigilance will continue as we exercise all measures to keep our schools safe and our students’ needs addressed. This includes maintaining a curriculum focused on the social, emotional and academic learning needs of our students. SEAL provides students with the opportunity to better understand their emotions. These lessons also help students to build connections with their peers and the school staff.

I believe that as ACPS takes a whole child approach to education; we are creating a system that helps to equitably prepare each student to achieve their full potential. We do this by creating environments of belonging where students can thrive and hone their skills in all subjects – from mathematics to literacy to science and beyond. The idea is to stir each student’s level of attention and to help increase their perception and memory to better retain knowledge. This means our students’ health also needs to be addressed, including getting sufficient sleep and a healthy-balanced diet. In turn, these actions can help our students cope with life’s stressors and move forward in achieving their goals.

It certainly will help this academic year as once again we will all be able to experience activities that had to either face limitations or be canceled amid the pandemic. This is welcome news, in particular for our sports, music, arts and after-school programs that enrich our students’ educational experience and bring our school community together. While the academic part of learning is of the utmost importance, the opportunity for students to come together as part of a group in sports, theater or orchestra, to name a few, are equally important and enhance the overall learning experience that is part of their growth.

During the first few weeks of the new academic year, ACPS’ division leadership have been visiting our schools. These stops lend themselves to the opportunity of welcoming back our students and providing encouragement for another year filled with promise and high expectations. It is also a great way to ensure the needs of all of our schools are being met.

During the summer break, our leadership team prepared, along with our teachers and support staff, for an academic year that lives true to the ACPS pledge to provide an equitable, high quality education for all students. With the launch of our newly designed website, our families will see how the update readily provides need-to-know information and easy access to translation and interpretation services when needed.

I would also like to urge all of our ACPS families to take advantage of the variety of ways you can become involved in your child’s educational experience. The Family and Community Engagement Center is one way to get the information you need about resources available and activities to engage in as part of the school division. Becoming an active member in the Alexandria PTA Council is another way to exchange ideas and stay connected with your child’s school.

Beginning a new school year turns the page to another chapter in a learning experience that lasts a lifetime. As laid out in the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan, our staff is ready to help empower each student as we remove barriers to learning, providing an inclusive experience where all students are afforded the opportunity to forge their own path forward to ensure their future success.

The writer is interim superintendent of Alexandria City Public Schools.
Alexandria and the Constitution

Sept. 17 is the 235th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution was signed in Philadelphia in 1787, but an event in Alexandria in 1785 served as a precursor to the founding convention of our nation.

On March 20, 1785, Samuel Chase and Thomas Stone showed up in Alexandria to represent Maryland, as the Maryland legislature commissioned them to do. Their purpose was to meet with a similar delegation from Virginia to agree upon regulations for their shared waterways, including the Potomac. The two men were only half of the commissioners chosen by Maryland but had the authority to negotiate on Maryland’s behalf by themselves. Both commissioners had signed the Declaration of Independence almost nine years earlier, so their appointment came as no surprise to their peers. Chase and Stone were surprised by the lack of any delegation to greet them.

Although prominent Virginians such as James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington were eager to resolve the issues of the joint waterways as quickly as possible, the four Virginians appointed: James Madison, Edmund Randolph, George Mason and Alexander Henderson were not in Alexandria to meet with them.

Fellow Virginia legislator John Tyler guessed that the lapse in communication was due to Patrick Henry’s forgetting to inform the commissioners of the time and date of the meeting. In any case, a third Maryland commissioner stopped to visit Washington at Mount Vernon on his way into our city, prompting Washington to send his carriage to his neighbor George Mason, who hated travel, to transport him to Alexandria. Chase and Stone met with Mason and Alexander Henderson, who was in town to work on a court case with Mason and unaware that he had also been chosen to negotiate on Virginia’s behalf. Bad weather delayed the two other Virginia commissioners and given how much of a priority it was to him, Washington invited both delegations to Mount Vernon to complete the negotiations.

The Mount Vernon Convention began on March 25 and concluded on the 28th. The Mount Vernon Compact consisted of thirteen articles. The articles guaranteed free passage for ships of both states through the Chesapeake and any rivers in either state, including the Potomac and the Pocomoke. They also declared the Potomac River a common highway for all U.S. citizens and residents.

The agreement between the states spurred them to encourage other states, particularly Pennsylvania, to agree to allow free passage along the Potomac all the way to Ohio. Tyler invited all 13 states to Annapolis in 1786 for a convention to propose a similar agreement between all states. Only five states showed up, and Maryland was not among those. However, Hamilton and Madison worked together at Annapolis to call a convention in Philadelphia the following year. That meeting resulted in our Constitution.

Out of the Attic is provided by The Office of Historic Alexandria.

Weekly Poll

Last Week

Do you think removing homework as a requirement – by removing penalties for not doing it – for ACPS students is a good or bad idea?

80% Bad.
14% Good.
6% I’m not sure.

This Week

Are you interested in recording an oral history for Alexandria’s new Oral History Center?

A) Yes, I plan to make an appointment.
B) Maybe someday when I’m older.
C) No.
D) I’m not sure.
DEATH NOTICES

CHESTER AVERY (85), of Alexandria, Sept. 8, 2022

RACHEL DAWSON, of Alexandria, Sept. 7, 2022

VINCENT HEFLIN (82), formerly of Alexandria, Sept. 7, 2022

KATHERINE MCCART (48), of Alexandria, Sept. 3, 2022

ANN WILLIAMS (86), of Alexandria, Sept. 2, 2022

Solutions from last week

CHESTER AVERY

RACHEL DAWSON

VINCENT HEFLIN

KATHERINE MCCART

ANN WILLIAMS
September 15

**Third Thursday Art Walk**
This month, visitors can take part in seasonal fall-themed family-friendly crafts, including Chunky Knit Pumpkins. Learn how to make your very own wrapped ‘Chunkin’ for $20. This is a walk-in event and registration is not required, but greatly appreciated.

**Time:** 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
**Location:** 614 Oronoco St.
**Information:**
https://visitalexandria.com/events/third-thursday-art-walk-family-friendly-craft-night/

**September 17**

**Improv Comedy Show:** The Auxiliary

_Improv is hosting an improv comedy show at the Lyceum._

Improv comedy is an unscripted performance. Everything will be completely made up on the spot, so everything performed is limited to this night only.

Suggested $10 donation to help defray the costs of space rental.

**Time:** 8 to 9:30 p.m.
**Location:** 201 South Washington St.
**Information:**

**September 16**

**Stratford Hall to Lee-Fendall House: African Americans Enslaved by the Lees**

Join Dr. Kelley Deetz, vice president of Collections and Public Engagement at Stratford Hall, as she shares the stories of some of the African and African Americans who were enslaved by the Lee family and highlights some connections between Stratford Hall and the Lee-Fendall House.

**Time:** 6 p.m.
**Location:** 614 Oronoco St.
**Information:**

**Park(ing) Day**
Join us for PARK(ing) Day, a worldwide event promoting the importance of creating and preserving public green space in urban areas by temporarily reclaiming on-street parking spaces and transforming them into exciting and imaginative park spaces or “parklets.”

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
**Location:** Various parklet sites throughout the city (GO Alex will be at the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station - Potomac Ave. and E. Glebe Rd.)
**Information:**
https://www.alexandriava.gov/parking/parking-day

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**Alexandria Planning & Zoning Department Notice of Administrative Review**

The following requests have been received for administrative review and approval.

For information on the following applications or to comment, visit the City’s website at www.alexandriava.gov/planning or call (703) 746-4666.

- **Special Use Permit #2022-00078**
  - **1001 N. Vail Street**
  - Administrative Special Use Permit request for a New Use for a Child and Elder Homes Care; zoned: RA/Residential Multi-Family Proposed Business Name: Mrs. Malik Daycare Applicant: Fauzia Hasan Malik Planner: Mavis Stanfield - mavis.standfield@alexandriava.gov

In accordance with Section 11-500 of the Zoning Ordinance, the above listed request may be approved administratively by the Director of Planning & Zoning. If you have any comments regarding the proposal above, please contact Planning & Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the planner listed no later than October 6, 2022.

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- **Special Use Permit #2022-00071**
  - **218 E. Monroe Ave.**
  - Administrative Special Use Permit request for a New Use for a Day Care Center; zoned: R-2-5/Residential Single or Two Family Business Name: Monarch Montessori School, LLC Applicant: Charlotte Haynes/Monarch Montessori School, LLC Planner: Mavis Stanfield – mavis.standfield@alexandriava.gov

In accordance with Section 11-500 of the Zoning Ordinance, the above listed request may be approved administratively by the Director of Planning & Zoning. If you have any comments regarding the proposal above, please contact Planning & Zoning staff at 703.746.4666 or email the planner listed no later than October 6, 2022.

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Improv comedy is an unscripted performance. Everything will be completely made up on the spot, so everything performed is limited to this night only.

Suggested $10 donation to help defray the costs of space rental.

**Time:** 8 to 9:30 p.m.
**Location:** 201 South Washington St.
**Information:**

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**Legal Notice**

**ALEXANDRIA PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

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**Public Hearing**

Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, held at City Hall, 301 King Street, Council Chamber and on Zoom webinar on Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described items.

**Public Hearing, Second Reading and Final Passage of an Ordinance to amend and rezone Section 5-901 (OLD TOWN NORTH ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT OVERLAY) of Article VI (SPECIAL AND OVERLAY ZONES) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment Nos. 2022-00006 and 2022-00007 (Implementation Ordinance for Text Amendment Nos. 2022-00006 and 2022-00007 associated with Potomac River Generating Station approved by City Council on July 5, 2022).**

PUBLIC HEARING, Second Reading and Final Passage of an Ordinance to amend and rezone Section 5-901 (OLD TOWN NORTH ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICT OVERLAY) of Article VI (SPECIAL AND OVERLAY ZONES) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment Nos. 2022-00006 and 2022-00007 (Implementation Ordinance for Text Amendment Nos. 2022-00006 and 2022-00007 associated with Potomac River Generating Station approved by City Council on July 5, 2022).
PUBLIC HEARING, Second Reading and Final Passage of an Ordinance to vacate two alleys located in the 700 block of North West Street (VAC No. 2020-00004) (Implementation Ordinance for Vacation No. 2020-00004 associated with Braddock West approved by City Council on May 15, 2021). [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

PUBLIC HEARING and Consideration of an Appeal of the Traffic and Parking Board’s July 25, 2022 Decision to Recommend the Removal of Nine Parking Spaces on Polk Street between Pelham Street and Palmer Place. Appellant: Kathleen Burns on behalf of petitioners.

THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLICATION. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL (LIMITED COPIES AVAILABLE). If the mayor finds and declares that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the meeting, this meeting will be continued to the following Saturday: GLORIA SITTON, CMC, CITY CLERK

LEGAL NOTICE

Board of Architectural Review
LEGAL NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing will be held by the Board of Architectural Review on Tuesday, September 27, 2022 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, room 2400, second floor of City Hall, 301 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 on the following applications:

BAR #2022-00315 OHAD
Request for alterations at 109 Duke Street.
Applicant: BOWA

BAR #2022-00359 OHAD
Request for alterations at 616 South Lee Street.
Applicant: Lynn and Raymond Stewart

BAR #2022-00360 PG
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Danny Lopez, Danny’s Painting LLC

BAR #2022-00361 PG
Request for demolition/encapsulation at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Danny Lopez, Danny’s Painting LLC

BAR #2022-00363 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1400 King Street.
Applicant: Kien Tran
BAR #2022-00376 OHAD
Request for reapproval of a previously approved application for demolition/encapsulation at 109 Duke Street.
Applicant: Martha Peterson

BAR #2022-00385 OHAD
Request for reapproval of a previously approved application for alterations at 109 Duke Street.
Applicant: Martha Peterson

BAR #2022-00387 OHAD
Request for alterations at 212 South Saint Asaph Street.
Applicant: Leah and Ben Williams
BAR #2022-00383 OHAD
Request for demolition/encapsulation at 816 South Pitt Street.
Applicant: Colm Dillon and Ciara Collins

BAR #2022-00382 OHAD
Request for alterations at 411 North Columbus Street.
Applicant: Guy Lamolinara and Anne Horan

BAR #2022-00389 PG
Request for alterations at 327 North Patrick Street.
Applicant: Keith Urbahn

BAR #2022-00390 OHAD
Request for alterations at 327 North Patrick Street.
Applicant: BOWA

BAR #2022-00391 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Shirley F. Carroll

BAR #2022-00392 OHAD
Request for alterations at 410 Jefferson Street.
Applicant: Shirley F. Carroll

BAR #2022-00393 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Danny Lopez, Danny’s Painting LLC

BAR #2022-00394 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1400 King Street.
Applicant: Martha Peterson

BAR #2022-00395 OHAD
Request for alterations at 109 Duke Street.
Applicant: Martha Peterson

BAR #2022-00396 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Danny Lopez, Danny’s Painting LLC

BAR #2022-00397 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Martha Peterson

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BAR #2022-00360 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Danny Lopez, Danny’s Painting LLC

BAR #2022-00361 PG
Request for alterations at 410 Jefferson Street.
Applicant: Shirley F. Carroll

BAR #2022-00362 OHAD
Request for alterations at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Shirley F. Carroll

Old and Historic Alexandria District (OHAD); Parker – Gray District (PG)

Public comments will be received at the Public Hearing. The public may submit comments in advance to Samantha Lockwood at samantha.lockwood@alexandriava.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Jackie Cato at jackie.cato@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711.

For further information, call the Department of Planning & Zoning at 703.746.4666 or visit alexandriava.gov/dockets

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Request for alterations at 411 North Columbus Street.
Applicant: Guy Lamolinara and Anne Horan

BAR #2022-00383 OHAD
Request for demolition/encapsulation at 816 South Pitt Street.
Applicant: Colm Dillon and Ciara Collins

BAR #2022-00387 OHAD
Request for alterations at 212 South Saint Asaph Street.
Applicant: Leah and Ben Williams
BAR #2022-00389 OHAD
Request for alterations at 327 North Patrick Street.
Applicant: Keith Urbahn

BAR #2022-00390 OHAD
Request for alterations at 327 North Patrick Street.
Applicant: BOWA

BAR #2022-00391 OHAD
Request for alterations at 616 South Lee Street.
Applicant: Lynn and Raymond Stewart

BAR #2022-00392 OHAD
Request for alterations at 700 South Washington Street (Parcel ID Address: 610 Franklin Street).

BAR #2022-00393 OHAD
Request for alteration at 211 Prince Street.
Applicant: BOWA

BAR #2022-00394 OHAD
Request for alteration at 1000 Cameron Street.
Applicant: Shirley F. Carroll

BAR #2022-00395 OHAD
Request for alteration at 410 Jefferson Street.
Applicant: Shirley F. Carroll

BAR #2022-00396 OHAD
Request for alteration at 1000 Cameron Street.
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JOB LISTING

Consulting firm based in Old Town seeking full/part-time admin assistant/analyst. Responsibilities include: word processing, answering phones, filing, research & data input, and basic editing (letters and reports). Word and Excel knowledge required. Casual dress. In office position. Email resume and salary requirements to parttime.position2022@gmail.com

POTOMAC WINDOW CLEANING

Residential window cleaning inside and out. Serving the local area for 35 years. Family owned and operated. (703) 356-4459. Licensed, Bonded, Insured. The Montgomery family thanks you for your interest.
It’s the little things that Mason gets excited about... like volunteering at the Historic Alexandria Foundation or The Washington Antiques Show. But what she loves the most is simply giving back to her communities. Following in the footsteps of her late mother (also a McEnearney Associate), Mason has helped her clients unravel the often messy and complicated process of buying and selling a home and find their special place in Alexandria. Connect with Mason to make your next move with a trusted McEnearney Associate.