Parajon proposes FY25 budget

City manager focuses on maintenance; residential taxes/fees to rise 3.5%
BY CAITLYN MEISNER

City Manager Jim Parajon released his proposed budget for the 2025 fiscal year to City Council on February 27, which included stormwater fee growth, city employee pay increases and massive funding toward road maintenance.

Parajon proposed an operating budget of $911.3 million, a 3% increase from the FY 2024 budget, which he said is in line with national inflation rates. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the inflation rate was 3.1% in January 2024.

In Mayor Justin Wilson’s monthly newsletter, he acknowledged the importance of the budget.

“There is no more important process than the adoption of our annual budget,” Wilson wrote in his March newsletter. “The budget is a reflection of the values of our community and I look forward to working with our residents and my colleagues to craft a budget that is reflective of those values.

General Assembly draws to close

Alexandria’s legislative director assesses city priorities
BY MARK EATON

The Virginia General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on Saturday. If a budget is adopted, legislators will return to Richmond on April 14 to conclude the legislative session by dealing with Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s vetoes, amendments and related matters.

Alexandria Assistant City Manager and Legislative Director Sarah Graham Taylor has been in Richmond for the 2024 session in a work atmosphere she called “unrelenting.”

In an interview, Taylor described bills relevant to Alexandrians that are headed to Youngkin to consider and previewed issues that will be worked out as the General Assembly addresses the state budget.

Loaded handgun found in child’s bag

APD responded to call from Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy, a K-5 school
BY RYAN HOPPER

An elementary school student accidentally brought a relative’s loaded Ruger 9 mm handgun to Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy on Friday, according to a Monday press release by the Alexandria Police Department and police scanner traffic from openmhz.com.

The release indicated this is an ongoing police investigation in consultation with Alexandria City Public Schools and the Commonwealth Attorney’s Office and that the responsible adult involved could still be charged. It read in part:

“These are facts related to the investigation:

• The gun was brought to school accidentally, the child grabbed the wrong backpack that happened to contain a family member’s legally owned handgun.
• The child later in the morning, while in class, observed the gun inside the backpack and approached the teacher about it.
• The teacher took immediate possession of the bag and notified administrators.
• The child did the right thing, not touching the gun and approaching a responsible adult about it.
• To our knowledge no other student observed the weapon nor was it removed from the bag at any time.
• Claims that the child had threatened other students have been investigated and not corroborated.”

The public was first made aware of this incident through the Virginia General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on Saturday. If a budget is adopted, legislators will return to Richmond on April 14 to conclude the legislative session by dealing with Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s vetoes, amendments and related matters.

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St. Patrick’s Day Parade

The Ballyshaneers held their 41st Alexandria Saint Patrick’s Day Parade on Saturday.

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The epitome of elegance and modern comfort crafted by Bluestone Builders. Indulge in the extraordinary. This home is situated on a 9,000 sq ft lot and has 7 bedrooms, 6.5 bathrooms, ELEVATOR and ROOF DECK. Welcomed by a lighted staircase, covered porch and beautiful entry foyer. Enjoy a functional layout and unique floor plan offering open living spaces for entertaining or quiet family weekends at home. Guests are welcomed to a spacious entry foyer and open light-filled main level. The main level layout offers so many options: main level bedroom with full bath OR home office; formal dining room or den/study; breakfast, or, casual family room... multi-functional! The kitchen boasts an oversized island, Sub Zero refrigerator, pot filler, drawer microwave, Italian stove. To include ample counter space, cabinetry and breakfast room that enjoys a double sided gas fireplace with the living room. Beautiful sets of French doors open to the custom bluestone patio. Al fresco dining and entertaining is easy with the outdoor kitchen: built-in grill and beverage refrigerator. Enjoy evenings by the fire table in the shadow of the illuminated Masonic Temple and unwind to the gentle sound of the water feature. There is a rear entry into the kitchen as well as a side entry to a mud room with built-ins and a convenient half bath. There is an elevator from the Basement level to the 3 upper levels. The primary suite is a retreat with vaulted ceilings, walk-in closet and second closet space, spa-like bathroom with soaking tub, oversized shower and double vanity. Two bedrooms share a Jack & Jill bath. A fourth bedroom has an en-suite bath & vaulted ceilings. Laundry room is on the primary bedroom level. The third level with full bath is versatile: it is the perfect party room with staircase to roof deck or a bedroom suite! The open staircase leads to a ROOFTOP deck with panoramic views of the DMV! The perfect spot for fireworks or rooftop beverages overlooking the city! Finished lower level has 9’ ceilings, a recreation room which can easily accommodate a pool table, large sectional, game table-ideal for hosting gatherings or movie nights. The walk-in pantry could also be outfitted to be a wine cellar! The au pair suite with exterior entrance and natural light can also function as a work out room or home office- there is a full bath as well. The house has 4 zones of HVAC for each floor. Alley access and 4 off-street parking spaces. ADU above garage OR garage are OPTIONS available. Convenient to King St Metro, shops and restaurants in Old Town & Del Ray.

Christine Garner (703) 587-4855
It’s not just my business, it’s my neighborhood.
For additional information & photos, go to: www.ChristineGarner.com

Happy St. Patrick’s Day!
The City of Alexandria ended 2023 with zero traffic fatalities, according to a city release. The city initiated a Vision Zero goal of eliminating roadway deaths and severe injuries in 2017, and last year marked the first zero-fatality calendar year since the start of the program. There were still over a dozen severe injury crashes last year and at least one victim of a 2023 crash is still fighting for their life in an intensive care unit. The program hopes to continue roadway safety improvements that can prevent all tragedies.

City reports zero traffic fatalities in 2023

Alethea Predeoux will start as a new deputy city manager, effective March 18, according to a city press release. Predeoux will focus on community health, human services and employee support. She is a longtime resident of the city and previously worked at the United States Office of Personnel Management, where she was chief of staff.

New deputy city manager hired

The Bishop Ireton girls basketball team won their first Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association title in program history Saturday in a matchup against St. Paul VI Catholic High School. BI won 56-52 in a fierce competition, ending Paul VI’s 16-year reign in the tournament. BI’s record this season was 24-9 overall and 13-3 in the region.

Bishop Ireton GBB team wins state title

Nicholas Huntsman, a student at George Mason Elementary School, was honored by the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth as one of the brightest students in the world, according to a press release from the Center. Huntsman was honored for his exceptional performance on college-level standardized tests.

Local youth named among world’s brightest
Libby Fugate crowned Cherry Blossom Princess

Elizabeth “Libby” Fugate, 22, will be crowned the Society of Virginia’s 2024 Cherry Blossom Princess on March 10, according to a press release. Fugate will be honored alongside Maryland and Washington, D.C.’s princess delegates in a Triple Crowning Ceremony. The Cherry Blossom Program is an education and cultural exchange program held during the District’s week-long festival. Women aged 19 to 24 are chosen by each state for academic achievement, interpersonal skills, leadership and a strong desire to serve others.

-Cmeisner@alextimes.com

Gadsby’s Tavern Museum is seeking junior docents for their summer program.

Gadsby’s Tavern seeking junior docents

Gadsby’s Tavern Museum is seeking applicants from fourth to seventh grade to participate in the junior docent program, according to a city release. The program allows children to provide museum tours on summer Sunday afternoons to visitors, practice speaking skills and engage visitors of all ages.

Students must complete the application and submit to Gadsby’s by March 15. There is also an audition on March 17 where students will give a historical presentation on a historical topic. For those seeking more information can visit alexandriava.gov/gadsbytavern and/or contact kristy.huettner@alexandriava.gov.

-Cmeisner@alextimes.com
Parajon, who is a city resident himself, said the community’s input has been fundamental in his process for crafting the budget, namely regarding stormwater utilities and maintaining existing facilities.

“I don’t lose sight of, ‘Who are we trying to provide for, who are we trying to help?’” he said. “And I think that’s really important.”

The single largest source of revenue that funds the operating budget comes from residential real property taxes, totaling nearly 37% of the proposed budget. All property taxes – residential and commercial real property – plus personal property taxes, will constitute an estimated $614.5 million of the proposed $911.3 million budget – or 67.4%.

“With a coinciding drop in the commercial tax base – which is a challenge for us – we as a city need to consider and continue to try to grow commercially as well as residential,” Parajon said. “Because the bulk of our funding to support all our city services, as well as school services, is through the property tax and sales tax. A significant portion of that comes from our residents.”

Parajon has proposed the real estate tax rate remain at $1.11 per $100 of assessed value, which has been the rate since FY 2021. The budget maintains 2.2 cents to be set aside for transportation improvements and 1 cent for affordable housing.

Despite the tax rate remaining stable in the proposed budget, the average Alexandria household will pay 3.5% more in FY 25 in local taxes and fees – which include real estate taxes, personal property taxes, utility taxes on gas/electricity/water and a communication sales and use tax, plus fees on trash removal, sewers, stormwater, decals and investment and maintenance. This data is available on the Residential Tax and Fee Burden chart in Parajon’s proposed budget.

This increase in the average residential tax burden outpaces the percentage rise in the FY 25 city budget even without an increase in the tax rate. While it is unknown how the increase in Alexandria’s city budget and the residential tax total will compare to the inflation rate when the new fiscal year begins on July 1, the FY25 BUDGET graph/city manager’s office

The largest source of revenue for the FY 25 budget is residential real property taxes.
last few years the tax rate increase has tracked that of the inflation rate. For instance, last year, the average amount of taxes and fees paid by Alexandrians increased by 3.4%, which outpaced the 12-month consumer price index – also known as the CPI – inflation rate as of July for the region, which was 1.8% according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. But the prior year, in FY 2023, which began July 1, 2022, Alexandria’s average tax burden increase of 6.2% lagged well behind the 12-month regional CPI inflation rate of 7.5%.

In FY 2022, the average Alexandria tax burden rose by 3.6%, compared to the 12-month July 2021 CPI rate of 4.4.

"I have a fiduciary responsibility on behalf of the city to look as tightly, as closely at where we are spending our dollars so that every dollar is used most effectively," Parajon said about the increase. "I felt this year we could provide good, positive services and programs throughout the city without a tax rate increase."

Parajon said he tried to fit funding for essential city services into the current tax framework. "We try to equate the level of revenue coming from taxes to what services are necessary to provide," he said. "We have a tremendous nonprofit environment that provides amazing successful services that frankly, if they weren’t there, we might have to provide those."

Parajon has also proposed the stormwater fee increase to an average of $324 per year for single-family households to maintain flood mitigation efforts. This increase is consistent with previous plans for 5% growth each year.

Additional revenue can be found in the proposal across departments. Notably, the Finance Department proposed a 25% personal property tax delinquency penalty after 30 days in addition to the existing 10% penalty for the first 30 days. This is expected to generate $150,000 in FY25, which is .02% of the proposed budget.

Some city departments may experience cuts, which Parajon said is based on efficiency; he emphasized that residents will not experience service cuts. "We look[ed] at opportunities where there might be a better way to save a few dollars and still be able to do the same things," Parajon said. "We did quite a bit of looking at some of our contracts, looking at how we operate, maybe a little bit more efficiently, maybe using technology a little bit more aggressively."

Despite some cuts, the city is dedicating more funding to pay city employees. Parajon proposed a $10.4 million increase from FY2024 – totaling $281 million – in the personnel budget to fund salary enhancements, new full-time employees and changes in benefit rates.

The average salary for a full-time employee is $86,037, with 46% of employees earning more than the average and 26% earning more than $100,000. Notable salary increases stem from the collective bargaining agreements reached between the city and local fire, police and labor and trade unions.

Parajon proposes those involved in the police and fire collective bargaining agreements from 2022 and 2023,
FY25 BUDGET

respectively, see scheduled enhancements totaling $2.7 million. He also proposes the labor and trade unit receive a total of $700,000 in pay increases, including a one-time bonus of $300,000 for members of the bargaining unit.

Alexandria City Public Schools is also fully funded in Parajon’s proposal, totaling $314 million between operations and capital projects. This is a 4%, or $10.3 million, increase from FY24. The bulk of this funding goes toward step increases, pay raises and additional staff positions.

“What I’ve not been able to do is what the School Board has requested in addition to all that... another roughly $11 million for additional compensation, and I think several new positions,” Parajon said. “I just don’t have the room given the limited revenue increase that we have, primarily through our property assessment on the residential on the commercial side.”

He said while he wasn’t able to find enough room for ACPS itself, there were lots of additional programs he tries to support to benefit “the whole child.”

“Things like additional services and programs that help the whole child grow into hopefully a very successful adult... that’s one of the Council’s top priorities,” Parajon said. “If you look throughout the budget, both in school and out of school, there is substantial investment, not just this past year, but the last two years.”

The proposed budget also included more than $5 million for road repaving in FY25 and more than $64 million for the next decade. Dozens of roads across the city are proposed to be repaved based on the Transportation and Environmental Services Department’s Pavement Condition Inventory Score.

“Everyone goes on our roads, whether you’re a bicyclist or a walker or a driver,” Parajon said. “It’s sort of an indication of the healthiness of a community. It’s one piece and certainly a well-kept roadway system is helpful.”

Parajon said ultimately, the budget is not just about dollars and cents, but what is beneficial to the community. He said he’s looking forward to the discussions with Council as the deadline approaches to approve a final budget.

The first public hearing about the budget will be held on March 16 at 9:30 a.m. and another on April 13. The budget adoption will take place on May 1.

-cmeisner@alextimes.com
a Friday afternoon press release in which APD stated that:

“Everyone remained safe and secure. The child’s parents were notified and were cooperative with police. At no time was there a threat.”

Here is the timeline of events according to publicly available police scanner traffic from openmhz.com.

11:44:38 a.m.: Police indicate a call had just come in from a Lyles-Crouch administrator that a weapon was found inside of a student’s backpack.

12:03:20 p.m.: Units on the scene identify the weapon as a Ruger 9 mm handgun and report its serial number to APD headquarters.

12:03:38 p.m.: Police search the handgun’s serial number and determine the handgun was not stolen.

The incident has shocked many in the Lyles-Crouch community, including Flavia Rusznak, a mother of two children who attend the school.

“Lyles-Crouch is a warm and loving community,” Rusznak said. “We're a tight-knit community, a neighborhood school; and it is scary and disheartening to know a member of our community brought in a loaded gun to our school.”

Rusznak said that the school’s PTA held meetings through the weekend and hosted a teacher/staff breakfast on Monday at the school to recognize the teachers and staff for all they do.

“I am in awe of our amazing teachers and staff who kept us all safe,” Rusznak said. “Particularly the homeroom teacher hero who handled the backpack that contained the loaded handgun with such bravery [and] kept the students safe and, incredibly, even shielded them from knowing the intensity of what was taking place at that moment.”

This incident has also renewed debate on gun storage legislation locally and in Richmond, with the shooting of Abby Zwerner, a Newport News teacher who was shot by one of her 6-year-old first graders on Jan. 6, 2023, in recent memory. Senate Bill 368, which requires the storage of a firearm and its ammunition to be “in a locked container, compartment or cabinet that is inaccessible to such minor,” passed both the Virginia Senate and General Assembly in late February and is on Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s desk.

“I cannot possibly imagine a more damning indictment of our policy failure on guns than a weapon in the hands of an elementary student,” Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson said on X, formerly known as Twitter. “We must do better.”

On Tuesday, The Uvalde Foundation For Kids, a nonprofit formed following the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde, Texas, announced that it has offered to help provide clear backpacks to Lyles-Crouch.

“The foundation is now extending an immediate offer to the school to help provide clear backpacks as an additional, less financially draining and more immediate tool to prevent weapons from being brought on campus,” the foundation said in an email to the Times.

As S.B. 368 lies on Youngkin’s desk, parents like Rusznak hope that this near tragedy will lead to legislative reform.

“I hope this will move our community to action by demanding more accountability and safety guards in place from our lawmakers,” Rusznak said. “There is a School Board meeting [March 7] and I hope members of our community will be present to advocate for change to keep our students, our community, all of us safe.”

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budget in the final days of the session.

Eviction prevention
Legislators passed several bills that support eviction prevention. These bills are intended to keep tenants from getting to the point of eviction. Some of these bills require certain types of landlords to provide key lease information in languages other than English.

Alexandria’s government communicates information in English, Arabic, Spanish and Amharic. If enacted, this legislation would require Alexandria landlords that meet criteria established in the legislation to provide, on request, lease cover sheets containing essential information in the same languages. The legislative objective is to prevent renters from signing leases they cannot afford.

Delegate Elizabeth Bennett-Parker’s (D) bill requires landlords to enter into payment plans for renters who are one month or less in arrears. The eviction prevention bills will go to Youngkin to consider.

Law enforcement hiring
Law enforcement agencies in Virginia and nationwide are in a hiring crisis. The General Assembly has passed a bill cosponsored by Delegate Charniele Herring (D), enabling police and sheriff’s departments to hire applicants who have reside in the United States for no less than 60 months and who are eligible for and have applied for citizenship.

“Especially in a community that has a significant immigrant population, the idea of making it easier to hire people who are of our immigrant communities was something that was really a focus for the city,” Taylor said. “We worked closely with [Alexandria] Sheriff Casey on it.”

The legislation, which failed in the last session, was endorsed by the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. It passed both houses and will go to the governor for consideration.

Combined sewer overflow remediation
AlexRenew’s tunneling project, RiverRenew, under the Potomac River, is in progress. RiverRenew, which has a price tag of more than $600 million, will substantially reduce the city’s combined sewer overflow in rain events. Hazel is a massive underground boring machine, and is now tunneling north along the Alexandria waterfront.

According to Taylor, Hazel is about 250 feet from her final destination.

“We’re super excited. It’s an idea of making it easier to hire people who are of our immigrant communities was something that was really a focus for the city.” – Sarah Graham Taylor, assistant city manager and legislative director
LEGISLATIVE

incredible project,” Taylor said. “And, it was done with a legislatively mandated deadline.”

When the General Assembly approved the RiverRenew project, it mandated a July 1, 2025, completion date. According to Taylor, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine compelled an extension of the deadline to July 1, 2026.

“The really nice thing about that legislation was [that] it was met with great support for the project and recognition that the city and AlexRenew, in particular, have really done the work to meet the deadline, which we knew was an aggressive deadline, and through no fault of their own found themselves a little behind,” Taylor said. “There was really an acknowledgment of the commitment and the work and the creativity and the [effort] to achieve what we all knew was a tough deadline.”

Taylor said the legislators, including Sens. Scott Surovell and Richard Stuart, who imposed the completion deadline, were supportive of RiverRenew and the extension. Taylor said that the deadline extension was endorsed by the Department of Environmental Quality and the State Water Commission.

Local environmental impact funds

Bills authorizing localities to ban gas-powered leaf blowers died in this legislative session. According to Taylor, the concern expressed by legislators was that landscaping companies and other businesses would have to cope with different requirements in different jurisdictions.

However, a bill carried by Delegate Alfonso Lopez (D) that allows localities to establish environmental impact funds is on its way to Youngkin’s desk. The bill allows localities to use their own money to provide incentives to mitigate local environmental impacts from, for example, landscaping equipment, or to encourage the use of more efficient heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems or appliances.

“I joked that I wanted to call it the leaf blower buy-back program, but really the idea is to allow localities to use their own money, and maybe draw down federal money or grants, to incentivize residents and businesses to invest in the preferred option,” Taylor said.

Taylor described this legislation as evidence of the effects of Virginia’s adherence to the Dillon Rule, which states that localities have only the authority expressly granted to them by the state.

“There are times when we have to come down and ask for authority to do things with our own money and in our own community,” Taylor said.

Budget ‘horse trading’

Taylor said pretty much everything else of particular local interest to Alexandria will be handled through the budget process.

“That’s everything from how do we fund our schools to how much do our teachers get paid to how much does our law enforcement get paid to what is the balance of investment when it comes to employees that are shared between the commonwealth and localities – folks in our Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office, folks in our Health Department and in our courts,” Taylor said.

Taylor described the budget as containing provisions pertaining to the regional greenhouse gas initiative which provides funding for flood mitigation projects that Alexandria has taken advantage of, funding for the affordable housing trust fund, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority funding and money for a minimum wage increase.

“The budget is going to be the vehicle for the sports and entertainment authority,” Taylor said. “[It] will stand up the first pieces for the sports and entertainment district [in Potomac Yard].”

Taylor described the Potomac Yard project as, “one of a lot of points of negotiation – the budget is really a transactional horse trade.” She said that the operative questions for legislators are, “What do we as members of the General Assembly want and what do we want to bring home?”

Taylor described the arena project as, “the biggest point of horse trading with the governor” for legislators with priorities that range from toll relief in Hampton Roads to WMATA funding in Northern Virginia to cannabis markets to slot-like betting machines called skill games that provide a revenue stream to bars, restaurants, gas stations and other businesses.

—fromalexandria@gmail.com
The 12U Red Northern Virginia Ice Dogs won the division championships after an undefeated season.

Youth hockey club goes 17-0

12U team makes club history with undefeated season

BY CAITLYN MEISNER

“Something just clicked with this team,” is the tagline of this ragtag team of 10-, 11- and 12-year-olds that went undefeated this season, with a 17-0 record. The Northern Virginia Ice Dogs have cemented themselves in regional history.

The Red 12U boys team skated through the season undefeated despite barely knowing one another and low enrollment in the hockey club.

The shutdown of the club’s home rink, the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, in early 2023 for renovations was a detriment to each age group’s retention, Head Coach Jordan Demerchant said.

“We lost like, over half of our hockey club...8U to 18U,” Demerchant said. “They all went to different rinks for good reasons. I understand, but it was kind of difficult for the kids that stayed because there were uncertainties.... We lost a lot of players, a lot of families because there were a lot of question marks going into last season.”

Demerchant said his team – which consisted of 13 boys, including two of his sons – had to share the ice each week with two other teams, totaling nearly 40 kids at one time. And, since the teams are decided randomly, there’s no guarantee that skill sets or personalities will mesh.

“We have some good kids, and then we have some kids that are learning the game,” Demerchant said of the start of the season. “... Everybody wants to score, everybody wants to have really cool moves and the ‘highlight reel.’”

Demerchant also said the team did not have a dedicated goalie until one player, George, took a chance on the position.

Despite these challenges, this team of 13 boys came out on top in the regular season and playoffs. Their first game in October 2023 was a 9-0 win against the Piedmont Predators Gold team.

And the high of this first win took them to the very end in a 6-1 victory against the Washington, D.C. Titans Blue team in the league championship game Sunday.

“In the locker room, all the boys are crying, ‘I don’t know why I’m crying, I’m happy,’” Demerchant recalled. “They almost never looked gassed. I know they felt tired, but those power skating drills paid off.”

Demerchant said these sprints were an important life lesson for the boys in addition to a good tactic to out-skate opponents.

“It’s long-term fun because you put in the work now, you see the benefits later,” Demerchant said. “It’s fun later; maybe you are able to win because you put in the hard work.”

Rory and Jack Lutt, 10- and 12-year-old brothers on defense, said this season was a nice change from previous seasons where they were at the bottom of the rankings in the league.

They said there was lots of camaraderie on the team as well, which is especially apparent with their mascot, a teammate’s water bottle named Wally.

“Every time we won, we put a rubber band on it, and so there are a bunch of rubber bands,” Lydia Lutt, a mother to two boys on the team, said.

PHOTO/JAY HALLEN

Kai Demerchant, one of Jordan’s sons on the team, warming up before a game.

PHOTO/JORDAN DEMERICHT

It is 100% a team effort,” Demerchant said. “[The coaches] tried to have ... fresh legs out there and just had the best five people out there at a time.”

Jack Hallen, an 11-year-old forward from Alexandria, said the conditioning in practices separated his team from their opponents.

“Since we’ve conditioned, we can sprint hard throughout the game,” Hallen said. “While it might be a close game at the end of the first period, then it’s going to start separating. ... We have more in the tank at the end. Then that’s where we start pounding.”

Lydia Lutt, a mother to two boys on the team, said the players were fresh each game.

“They played five games in 36 hours and I don’t think you could have picked out which game was the first game and which was the last,” Lydia recalled. “They almost never looked gassed. I know they felt tired, but those power skating
bands on it [now],” Jack Lutt said. “After every game, we would take a knee, put the water bottle up, and then someone will put the rubber band on and then we all cheer.”

Lydia Lutt said this season brought her boys and the entire team together in a way she couldn’t have imagined.

“I don’t know what happened over the summer, but these kids got on the ice this time and they were passing to each other, they were looking up the ice for each other,” Lydia Lutt said. “This year, they were a true team.”

“See them on the ice together: they communicate, they look to each other a lot more. … They trust each other, frankly,” Lydia Lutt said.

“Although the whole team won’t be able to remain together in the 2024-2025 season, Demerchant said any team can create something special. “Well, last year, we didn’t know our team,” Demerchant said. “And we came together.”

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She said her and her husband initially struggled with the decision to let their boys play on the same team, but they haven’t regretted that decision since the start of the season.

“To see them on the ice together: they communicate, they look to each other a lot more. … They trust each other, frankly,” Lydia Lutt said. “They know they have the best intentions at heart and the right goal at heart, which is the team and the team’s victory.”

Demerchant said he saw some of this during team bonding, especially over the tournament weekend.

“We’re in the hotel, and the boys are hanging out … and just connecting with kids that they wouldn’t have talked to a year ago,” he recalled. “They go to battle with these guys, they sweat with these guys, they’re hanging out playing cards in the lobby.”

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“To see them on the ice together: they communicate, they look to each other a lot more. … They trust each other, frankly,” Lydia Lutt said. “They know they have the best intentions at heart and the right goal at heart, which is the team and the team’s victory.”

Demerchant said he saw some of this during team bonding, especially over the tournament weekend.

“We’re in the hotel, and the boys are hanging out … and just connecting with kids that they wouldn’t have talked to a year ago,” he recalled. “They go to battle with these guys, they sweat with these guys, they’re hanging out playing cards in the lobby.”

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There are so many restaurants to choose from in Alexandria, but only so many are meant for the kids! Whether it’s the menu items, atmosphere or both, these local restaurants are perfect for kids.

Take a look at my top five kid-friendly restaurants.

5. **Bella Napoli, 1310 Mount Vernon Ave.**

Bella Napoli is your iconic Italian restaurant – believe me, I have been to Italy.

To start off, they serve sweet-tasting salads and Italian bread that any kid would devour. To me, the best food is the pasta, which can come gluten-free, egg-free, both or neither.

After this comes dessert, and their tiramisu is delicious. Once you’re loaded up with sugar, your parents can boot you out of the restaurant and let you run around the block.

4. **Del Ray Pizzeria, 2218 Mount Vernon Ave.**

The Del Ray Pizzeria or, as the locals call it, the DRP, is the best pizzeria in town. The DRP has outdoor seating, which is heated during the winter, but this terrific way to eat a meal is not anything compared to man’s greatest invention, PIZZA!

The DRP has every kind imaginable, from cheese and pepperoni, to vegetarian to gluten-free. Their pizzas have very little grease and are seasoned in just the right way to make them mouth-watering. As they like to say, “It’s not Chicago style pizza, it’s not New York style pizza, it’s Del Ray pizza.”

3. **Holy Cow, 2312 Mount Vernon Ave.**

As its hilarious name suggests, this is “Del Ray’s gourmet burger joint.” It makes it onto this list because of its customizable menu that sits at the entrance, waiting to be filled out. You can pick and choose your way through categories such as “Sassy & Saucy” and “Make It Fancy.”

It even has an old train station departure and arrival board that displays things such as fun facts, jokes and the weather and time in St. Louis, Alexandria and New York City.

2. **Los Tios, 2615 Mount Vernon Ave.**

Right away you will love this place because of the bowl of mints at the entrance. As soon as you are seated, they hand you a bowl of salsa and chips that are still warm. After you have finished demolishing the chips, you can play on the playground, which is located right across the street, until your dinner arrives.

When the food does come, you will wolf down your meal and ask to play on the playground again. It’s a perfect date night for the parents!

1. **The Dairy Godmother, 2310 Mount Vernon Ave.**

If you are starting to notice the trend of clever names for Del Ray restaurants, you’re right! The Dairy Godmother is as good – if not better – than the name implies. Every kid knows that sugar outranks everything else, even pizza, and that is why the Dairy Godmother is number one on the list.

The Dairy Godmother offers ice cream in cones or bowls, shakes, a flavor-of-the-day, gelato, ice cream cups for dogs, ice cream sandwiches, ice cream sundaes and baked goods. There is also an abundance of toppings to choose from.

Just Fine Donuts shares space with the Dairy Godmother and is a perfect example of “the early bird gets the worm” – or, in this case, the donut – because they are usually sold out by evening. Enjoy a donut while you’re there!

Now go out and enjoy what Del Ray has to offer!

The writer is a sixth grade student at Potomac Classical Conservatory in Del Ray.
The kindergarten prep class at Hopkins House recently learned about recycling and used their imaginations to create a recycled robot.

The kids at the Child & Family Network Center have been learning about community helpers, especially in a handmade firetruck. The students have been enjoying learning about the community and the different jobs everyone performs.

Bright Mind preschoolers are becoming regular visitors to Elance at Old Town Alexandria. During the bimonthly visits, preschoolers and residents read to each other, make crafts and enjoy holiday celebrations.

On Valentine’s Day, St. Paul’s Episcopal’s twos class was learning about the five senses with a heart-shaped solid made from baking powder and water. Using eye droppers, children gently squeezed and dribbled vinegar onto their heart. They watched and listened as the heart slowly fizzled into an oozy red puddle.

The Junior Kindergarten at Burgundy Farm Country Day School took a field trip to see the drummer, Kofi Dennis, illustrate the vibrant life of a West African village through music, storytelling and dance.

The Early Saints at St. Stephen’s and St. Agnes School are learning about two artists: Alma Thomas and Yayoi Kusama.

On February 20, Immanuel Lutheran School Jr. Kindergarten students celebrated being “100 Days Brighter” as they observed their 100th day of school.

In the primary classroom at Monarch Montessori School, the Montessori Guide focuses on dexterity, spelling and phonetics with daily writing and reading exercises.

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Washington Street United Methodist Church Preschool enjoyed a walking field trip to the Post Office, a nearly 20-year tradition. The preschoolers mailed handmade “secret” Valentine’s to parents.
DIY tips for installing crown molding

BY FAMILY FEATURES

If you’re looking for a cost-effective way to dress up a room in your home, crown molding can be a simple way to add elegance and class with minimal investment.

Crown molding is most commonly applied as a decorative trim where the walls meet the ceiling. It is often painted the same color as the baseboards, door frames and other woodwork, but can be colored to match the ceiling or a different shade to create extra drama.

This step-by-step guide can show you how to create a striking design element in your home.

1. Measure the perimeter of your room, remembering to take into account any inset corners or bump-outs that add additional inches. Be sure to pad your total when purchasing materials to allow for a mistake or two.

2. Prime and paint the molding, front and back, and allow it to dry completely.

3. Mark the studs near the ceiling on all walls so you can securely attach the molding.

4. Measure from the ceiling down the depth of the molding and mark this point. Using a level, establish a baseline for the length of each wall.

5. Use a miter saw or coping saw to trim angles for corner pieces. Remember the molding as it lays on the saw table is the inverse of its fit to the wall, so you may want to make a few practice cuts to be sure you’re trimming angles properly. A good rule of thumb: For outside corners, the top edge is longer; for inside corners, the longer edge is on the bottom.

6. Attach molding using a nail gun, making sure to hit as many studs as possible for secure attachment.

7. On the sections that fit in corners, nail the center of the molding first, leaving the corner end loose. Use a wood shim or screwdriver behind the bottom edge of the molding to make adjustments and eliminate gaps before securing the corners.

8. When you join two pieces for a long stretch of wall, be sure the seam falls over a stud, so you can nail both ends firmly in place. For the most polished look, fit the ends of these pieces together with complementary 45-degree angles.

9. If your nails aren’t fully sunk, use a nail set to press them deeper. Use wood putty to cover nail holes.

10. Caulk all seams using a thin stream and use a finger dipped in water to smooth away excess.

11. Touch up paint, especially over putty spots and seams.
Making the most of your dog’s daily walk

By Kim Jones Gilliam

We all know that we’re supposed to take our dogs out on a daily walk, yet studies show that about 30% of us don’t bother. Maybe it’s not exciting enough; doing the same thing every day can get dull.

But those walks are about so much more than just getting them to go potty: They provide mental stimulation, physical exercise, socialization opportunities and a chance to reinforce training all while building your bond.

Let’s dive into the many important reasons why you shouldn’t skip your dog’s walks.

Your dog’s physical health

Without them, your dog is likely not meeting their daily exercise requirements. It’s a real concern when the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention reported in 2022 that nearly 60% of American dogs are overweight.

While the amount of exercise they need varies based on age, breed and health — from 30 minutes a day to as much as a few hours — what is certain is that dogs won’t exercise themselves. Letting them out in the yard does not offer enough stimulation or ensure movement; they’re apt to just sit there in a familiar environment unless you actively engage them.

Your physical health

A 2011 study by Michigan State University showed that people who owned and walked their dogs were 34% more likely to meet federal benchmarks on physical activity. The same study also showed that this same group walked about an hour longer per week.

Your dog’s mental health

The “dog shaming” phenomenon that shows photos of dogs next to signs describing their misdeeds — including destroying couches, chewing up shoes and the like — showcases behavior that is sometimes rooted in anxiety, but many times is the result of dogs being bored. Dogs need mental stimulation to stay out of trouble.

Your bond

Spending time together on walks will deepen your bond and help deter annoying, attention-seeking behaviors such as excessive barking or whining.

Social time

You’ll most likely encounter other dogs and owners on your walk or neighbors out for a stroll. This offers an opportunity for your dog to learn acceptable social interactions and build their confidence. And your conversations with fellow dog lovers help you stay socially connected.

There are huge benefits from fitting in your dog’s walk each day, but if it somehow feels like a drag, here are some ideas that can help you make the most of it.

• Let your dog decide where to go by playing “follow the dog.” Rather than take your standard route, relax and let your dog lead the way. Sure, you might end up by the neighborhood squirrel hangout or find yourself stopping at every fire hydrant on your block, but it gives your dog a chance to show you what they find interesting.

• Add a few “sniff breaks” throughout your walk. Scent is the way that dogs experience the world; they have 50 times more olfactory receptors than us. It’s how they acquire information about each other and their environment.

• Mix it up and take a trip to your local park or trail to check out some new scenery. Your dog will be thrilled by the ride itself, let alone all the new sights and smells.

• Simply vary your walking route. Take a right instead of a left because some added variation will make it more enjoyable for you and your dog.

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Regular dog walks can strengthen the bond between dogs and owners.

• Walk to support your favorite animal rescue! ResQwalk and WoofTrax let you raise money for your animal welfare organizations just by walking on their apps.

If you need to stay closer to home, you can of course tire your pup out in the yard with a good game of frisbee catch, ball fetch or tug-of-war game.

Or, if you just don’t have the time, consider a daycare, dog walker or ask a friend to take your dog for a walk. Your pet will enjoy the company, and you’ll come home to a happy, healthy dog.

The writer co-owns Frolick Dogs, a canine sports club in Alexandria.
Welcome home to St. John’s Square condominium in historic Old Town. Built in 1981 as a “twin” to its adjacent neighbor, the newer building and its circa 1835 neighbor constitute a sophisticated set of residences in the heart of the city.

With high ceilings, abundant natural light, handsome landscaping and assigned parking for two, these residences are highly sought-after, yet rarely available. Gorgeous repurposed heart pine floor boards live gently within the 1981 building, lending it character from its antique ancestor.

Known for its accessibility to the King Street Metro Station, St. John’s Square offers the walk-to-everything lifestyle. Just steps to cafes, markets and restaurants, find also a seven-block walk to the waterfront.

Gracious living in historic Old Town
Letters

Still waiting for Euille’s response

To the editor:

I commend Alexandria Times for releasing the extensive report, “Former Mayor Euille was focus of FBI probe,” on February 13, by the Alexandria Journalism Project regarding the financial transaction between then-Mayor Bill Euille and Hubert Hoffman.

It was a well-documented piece of reporting that requires an explanation from Euille. Thus far, the silence has been deafening.

I have read on social media where some have speculated that the failure of the U.S. Attorney’s Office to prosecute the case that the FBI brought to them implies that Euille did nothing wrong in accepting more than a quarter of a million dollars from a major landowner and developer in the city.

People have speculated that perhaps there was the sale of a property, or some other business transaction. Others have speculated that it was pay to play. Since the FBI does not reveal the outcome of its investigations, and the U.S. Attorney’s decisions are also confidential, we are left to speculate what that payment was for.

But the fact is that it really doesn’t matter what the payment was for. It was a very large financial transaction between a sitting mayor and, as the investigative story pointed out, a major landowner who came before Council to amend numerous special use permits to allow far more density on his land holdings than had been granted previously.

This fact is relevant to all Alexandrians because no matter what the purpose of the payment was, this payment violates the Code of Virginia, Title 30-108, which states: “A legislator who has a personal interest in a transaction shall disqualify himself from participation in the transaction.”

The language goes on to state: “Unless otherwise prohibited by the rules of his house, the disqualification requirement of this section shall not prevent any legislator from participating in discussions and debates, provided (i) he verbally discloses the fact of his personal interest in the transaction at the outset of the discussion or debate or as soon as practical thereafter and (ii) he does not vote on the transaction in which he has a personal interest.”

As the Times’ investigative story points out, at no time did Euille disclose or recuse himself from voting in any Council meeting when the Hoffman properties were being voted on. Even with Virginia’s and Alexandria’s very weak ethics laws, this is a violation of the legal requirement to disclose and recuse.

But furthermore, at its core, it is an affront to basic decency and honesty. And yet, we are still waiting for an explanation from Euille – but none has been forthcoming.

As former Mayor Allison Silberberg stated in the article, “This is about the public trust. This matter is between former Mayor Euille and the people of Alexandria.” The article also says that she stated “Alexandrians deserve to know whatever the truth is about the check.”

She is right. To me, it is a violation of the Code of Virginia. It is also a breach of trust. It is infuriating and wrong.

- John Frost, Alexandria

All models are wrong; some are useful

BY JOE SESTAK

City Manager Jim Parajon can hopefully use his experience as assistant city manager during the contentious construction of the Dallas Cowboys’ new sports stadium in Arlington, Texas, to caution about studies that promote the economic impact of Alexandria’s proposed sports arena. Four separate consultants were hired to do four economic impact studies by four different sponsors.

Texas officials wanted the stadium, and its impact was only $51 million. Yet, a property-development company that wanted to sell land to Irving for the new stadium had a study showing $346 million in annual economic impact for Irving and its surrounding county. Contrast that with the study by those opposed to the stadium, which stated, “The best outcome Arlington can expect is $290.5 million as a result of the building of a new stadium for the Cowboys … (and) The loss for Arlington could be as high as $325.3 million.”

These vastly differing stadium studies officials were not interested in subsidizing another stadium – showed the Cowboys’ annual impact was only $51 million.

Photo of the Week

Alexandria Hibernians gathered on Saturday for the city’s first-in-the-country St. Patrick’s Day parade.
proven the truism that all models are wrong; some are useful. It’s why Parajon’s familiarity with Arlington’s modeling studies behooves him and our elected officials to look under the hood of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership’s sole study before accepting its uncertain economic forecast. It’s simple, as the IMPLAN model used is available off-the-shelf for around $1,000 and non-economists can grasp its fundamentals to produce outputs with a few hours of training.

They’ll find the model has 25 sources to manipulate, from misincluding residents’ spending that already takes place and claiming total – instead of marginal – economic benefits, to misadjusting multiplier coefficients and selecting sales instead of household income multipliers.

Alternatively, City Council should do what San Antonio’s Council did when it was confronted with two economic impact studies: one for a small three-day rodeo with an impact of $30 million; and one for a large 21-day festival with a surprisingly small impact of $16 million. Council had the festival consultant – an academic economist – then use the modeling assumptions within the rodeo consultant’s study for the festival’s model. The “new” economic impact was $321 million – a 2,000% increase over the legitimate $16 million – a 2,000% increase over the festival’s model. The Council’s model has 25 sources to manipulate, from misincluding residents’ spending that already takes place and claiming total – instead of marginal – economic benefits, to misadjusting multiplier coefficients and selecting sales instead of household income multipliers.

But just as Arlington refused to release its study – citing Dallas Cowboy proprietary information – AEDP has also refused, citing proprietary Monumental & Sports Entertainment information. When Arlington’s economic impact from a vibrant retail, commercial, residential, entertainment urban center with parking garages had not materialized – and the Texas attorney general’s office determined that associated documents and emails were public records to be released – Arlington sued the attorney general to prevent it.

Assessments continued to show the stadium was a raw deal for Arlington, and only in the last few years, after the city raised $1.1 billion in additional taxes, was there public investment for the long-hoped development of the entertainment and business hub, as well as to pay off the stadium’s debt and ensure the Texas Rangers baseball team stayed.

With such a “buyer beware” forewarning, city officials would be derelict not to direct the release of AEDP’s study, and to conduct a second impartial one, using one of the two alternative methods above. After all, the city conducted close to 20 studies on the economic future of the Torpedo Factory, where the monetary and tax consequences for our residents are minor compared to the promises of AEDP’s arena study.

The detailed reporting by the Alexandria Journalism Project that was released by the Alexandria Times on February 13 about former Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille’s receipt, while in office, of $260,000 from local developer Jay Hoffman elicits mixed reactions and numerous questions.

To briefly summarize, a 2012 deposit slip for a $260,000 deposit to Euille’s personal account and Hoffman’s check stub for the same amount were discovered in January 2017 in a file drawer in Euille’s former city hall office. City officials notified the FBI which, according to the story, has closed its investigation. We may not know all the facts, but what should we make of these events?

As a legal matter, personal generosity has no limit. A donor may give any amount of money, subject to federal gift taxes. This is true even if the recipient holds elective office.

The federal bribery statute, 18 U.S.C. § 201, makes it a crime for a public official to “receive or accept anything of value” in exchange for being “influenced in the performance of any official act.”

In June 2016, about six months before the discovery of the deposit slip and check stub, the Supreme Court, in McDonnell v. United States, an 8-0 decision, interpreted the statute in a way that made it more difficult to prosecute elected officials for bribery.

Former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell and his family had accepted more than $150,000 in luxury gifts, travel and loans from businessman Jonnie R. Williams, Sr. The Washington Post’s list of items Williams gave to the McDonnell family can be found on their website.

The Supreme Court held that an “official act” is a decision or action on a question, matter, cause, suit, proceeding or controversy that involves a specific exercise of formal governmental power.

In an opinion by Chief Justice John Roberts, the Court held that arranging a meeting, consulting another official or hosting an event do not rise to the level of an “official act” under the federal bribery statute. Prior Supreme Court cases had established that merely because a matter was pending before a government official was not sufficient proof that something related to the matter was an “official act.”

The AJP report in the Times detailed the numerous times that Hoffman projects came before Euille, as mayor, and City Council. The McDonnell case, and the numerous instances when City Council acted on Hoffman matters may explain why, thus far, there has been no prosecution in the Euille-Hoffman situation. There may be no way to prove beyond a reasonable doubt which “official act” by Euille the $260,000 influenced, or if the money influenced any “official act” by Euille.

With a few disappointing exceptions such as James Comey’s investigation of Hillary Clinton or Robert Hur’s investigation of Joe Biden, prosecutors do not talk about cases they decide not to bring. An explanation about the decision to decline to prosecute in this situation is probably unlikely.

The McDonnell and Euille situations are not equivalent. The golf outings, wedding catering, and Rolex watch accepted by the McDonnell family were luxury treats. Euille, who did not respond to my invitation to comment, may have simply needed money and received help from a long-time friend.

Alexandrians may never obtain a complete understanding of what went on between Euille and Hoffman. Even if the public had a right to that understanding, it would probably be difficult to ascertain how Alexandria’s development history would have been different if Euille had not accepted money from Hoffman. Mayors do few official things unilaterally; Euille was one of seven City Council votes.

Still, the Euille-Hoffman situation is, as high school students say, “Not a good look.” The money transfer creates negative inferences about purchased access or worse; however, inferences are not facts. The situation also reinforces cynical assumptions that local officeholders are corrupt.

Others may react to the Euille-Hoffman situation by asking whether the essentially full-time job of mayor is appropriately compensated at, according to the city’s website, $41,500 per year.

Baseball great Shoeless Joe Jackson was reportedly approached by a boy after allegations surfaced that Jackson and some of his Chicago White Sox teammates intentionally lost the 1919 World Series to benefit gamblers and themselves. The boy reportedly said, “Say it ain’t so, Joe!”

Many Alexandrians identify with the boy’s disappointment. Even so, the takeaway may be that terrible optics by public officials do not automatically create legal consequences.

The writer is a former lawyer, member of the Alexandria School Board from 1997 to 2006, and English teacher from 2007 to 2021 at T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School. He can be reached at aboutalexandria@gmail.com and subscriptions to his newsletter are available free at aboutalexandria.substack.com.
Julia Johns and the Alexandria Infirmary

BY JENNIFER LANE

On March 1, 1873, 151 years ago this month, the Alexandria Infirmary opened its doors. A group of women headed by Julia Johns established the Infirmary, now known as Inova Alexandria Hospital.

Within three months of their first meeting, they had secured a location – a converted house at the southwest corner of Duke and Fairfax Streets – and hired a staff of three consulting physicians, a matron, a nurse and a cook. The Infirmary’s opening inaugurated a significant improvement in health care for Alexandrians, who previously had to travel to Washington, D.C. or Richmond to receive hospital care.

The creation of the Alexandria Infirmary by Johns and the women who formed the founding Board of Lady Managers was part of a 19th-century sisterhood of labor, activism and advocacy by individual women and of the organizations they organized, led and supported to improve their communities and nation.

The Second Great Awakening, a Protestant religious revival movement which began at the turn of the 19th century, brought more public engagement through faith. The growth of women’s participation and leadership in religious circles allowed women to move into other social movements and further their leadership and management skills independent of male-led groups.

The outbreak of the Civil War also expanded women’s leadership opportunities, as they took on labor and financial responsibilities for men who had left for war. White women in northern and southern areas of the country established soldiers aid societies to supply armies with food, clothing and medicine.

Julia Johns, the daughter of Virginia Episcopal Bishop John Johns, had lifelong experience with her father’s administrative responsibilities and pastoral duties. Julia Johns sometimes accompanied her father as he visited congregations, met with clergy, administered sacraments and, later, ministered to wounded soldiers in Richmond’s hospitals.

During the Civil War, Bishop Johns’ family relocated to the Richmond area with Alexandria friends. Julia Johns and her friend, Mrs. McGuire, volunteered as nurses in Confederate hospitals there.

After returning home to Alexandria, Julia Johns combined her knowledge of hospital care and administration to create and sustain a successful women-run hospital. Johns and the white Protestant middle-class women who formed the Infirmary’s administrative board shared beliefs in Christian charitable activism and were prominent members of Alexandria’s faith communities.

They used their connections to financially sustain the Infirmary in its early years. Church collection proceeds and donations of goods from individuals and businesses supported regular operations. Special fundraising efforts across church communities supported the purchase of new buildings. Substantial community fundraising from Black and white church congregations financed construction of Alexandria Hospital’s first purpose-built facility, which opened in 1917.

The Board of Lady Managers had the dual role of administering healthcare and marshaling financial support. They retained director positions on the hospital’s board after it merged with Inova Health Systems in 1997. Today, women-led organizations including the Lady Managers and the Twig, the Junior Auxiliary of Inova Alexandria Hospital, continue supporting the hospital’s work in our community.

"Alexandria Hospital: Women Mobilize the Community," an exhibition on view at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, marks the 150th anniversary of the Alexandria Infirmary. Visit the museum and learn more about the vital roles that women have played in sustaining the hospital.

Out of the Attic celebrates Women’s History Month throughout the month of March. For a listing of virtual events and celebrations, please visit alexandraviava.gov/historic.

Out of the Attic is provided by the Office of Historic Alexandria.
Weekly Words

PARTY ANIMALS by Dylan Schiff, edited by Jeff Chen

DEATH NOTICES

MARLENE ANN BRINKER (89), of Alexandria, Feb. 23, 2024
MARY ALLEN DESANTIS (93), of Alexandria, Feb. 20, 2024
WILLIAM JOSEPH "LIAM" HANNAHER (92), of Alexandria, Mar. 4, 2024
DONN VINCENT MCKINNEY (61), of Alexandria, Feb. 26, 2024
GERALD WAREHAM (85), of Alexandria, Mar. 3, 2024
NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

March 7, 2024
City of Alexandria
421 King St., Suite 215
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.746.4990

These notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the City of Alexandria.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or about March 29, 2024 the City of Alexandria will submit a request to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of Housing Choice Voucher (Project-Based Vouchers) funds under Section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f), as amended to undertake a project known as the redevelopment of the Samuel Madden Homes for the purpose of constructing 532 housing units, including 326 units of low-income housing at 899 and 999 N Henry Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. The estimated project funding is $256 million and the project will have 137 project-based vouchers for low- and moderate-income households, a total of $110,000,000, paid out over a 20-year period.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The City of Alexandria has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR), which is on file at the Office of Housing, 421 King St, Ste. 215, Alexandria, VA 22314. All comments received by 5 P.M. on March 25, 2024 will be considered by the City of Alexandria prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The City of Alexandria certifies to HUD that James F. Parajon in his capacity as City Manager consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD’s approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the City of Alexandria to use Program funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

HUD will accept objections to its release of fund and the City of Alexandria’s certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the City of Alexandria; (b) the City of Alexandria has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to HUD, Office of Public Housing – Washington DC Field Office, Bank of America Building, Tower II, 100 S. Charles Street, Suite 500, Baltimore, MD 21201, Attention: Ms. Lauren Davis, Director, Office of Public Housing – Washington DC Field Office. Potential objectors should contact HUD at (410) 209-6533 to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

James F. Parajon, City Manager

Board of Architectural Review
LEGAL NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing will be held by the Board of Architectural Review on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 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#2024-00045 OHAD
Request for alterations at 8 Potomac Court
Applicant: Dave Vodvarka

BAR#2024-00047 OHAD
Request for alterations at 330 N Royal Street
Applicant: Carolyne and Michael Strain

BAR#2024-00054 OHAD
Request for alterations at 208 S Saint Asaph Street
Applicant: Virginia Bennett

BAR#2024-00057 OHAD
Request for alterations at 100 Gibbon Street
Applicant: Fern & David Jaffe

BAR#2024-00058 OHAD
Request for partial demolition/encapsulation at 100 Gibbon Street
Applicant: Fern & David Jaffe

Public comments will be received at the Public Hearing. The public may submit comments in advance to Lanning Blaser at lanning.blaser@alexandriava.gov or make public comments on the day of the Public Hearing.

For reasonable disability accommodation, contact Alicia.Chase@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3810, Virginia Relay 711. If you prefer communication in another language, free interpretation and translation services are available to you. Please email LanguageAccess@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.3960.

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

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- Maggie and Barry Stauffer
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