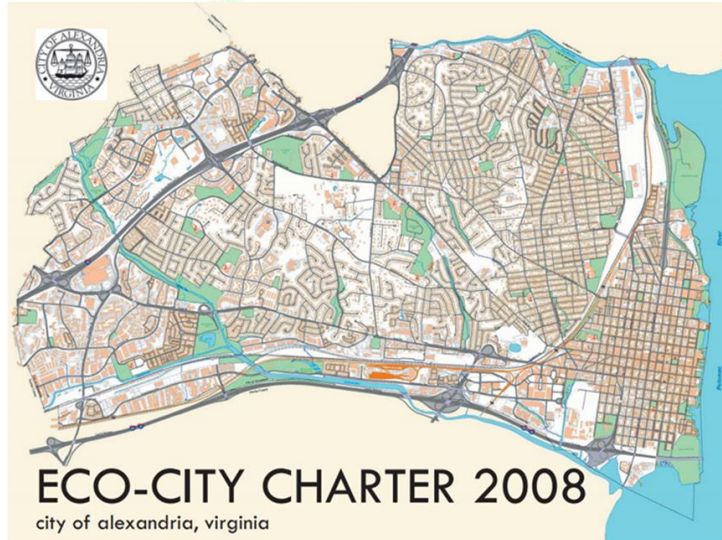
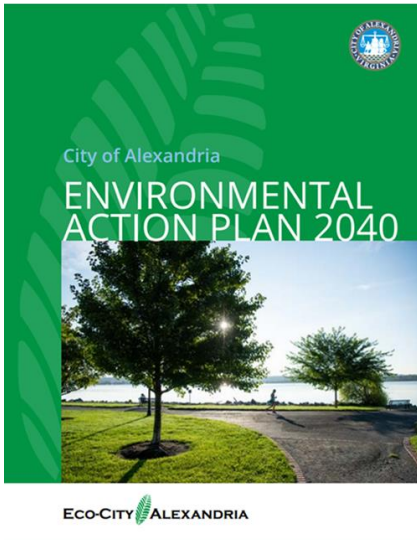




*Environmental Policy Commission*



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**FY2023 EPC ANNUAL REPORT**

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023

JUNE 27, 2023

## 1. Introduction

The Alexandria Environmental Policy Commission (EPC) was established under Chapter 4, Article M, of the City Code to “advise and make recommendations to the City Council and, when appropriate, to the Planning Commission and City Manager”. This report provides a summary of EPC activities during Fiscal Year 2023.

## 2. Who We Are

The Alexandria City Council established the EPC in 1970 to advise and make recommendations to the City Council and, where appropriate, to the Planning Commission and City Manager, on matters relating to the following:

- The Climate crisis and its effects
- Clean air;
- Land use;
- Noise pollution;
- Pesticides, herbicides and contaminants;
- Solid waste;
- Water quality and supply;
- Other matters referred to the EPC by the City and citizens; and
- Other topics relating to the conservation and protection of Alexandria’s environment.

The EPC, when fully appointed consists of 13 members, including five members from the field of environmental sciences, five citizen-at-large members, one member from the field of urban planning, one member with experience in Federal or state environmental statutes/regulations, and one representative from the Alexandria business community. The EPC regularly works with other organizations to further the environmental goals of the City.

The following is a list of Commissioners who served on the EPC during FY2023.

Dan Beattie <sup>2</sup>	Nicole Heckman <sup>3</sup>
Eldon Boes	Kathie Hoekstra (Chair)
Edith Cecchini <sup>3</sup>	Anna Marino <sup>2</sup>
Alexander Clark	Michael Olex (Vice-Chair)
Benjamin Cuddy <sup>2</sup>	Brendan Owens <sup>1</sup>
Jennifer Debias	Theresa Romanosky <sup>2</sup> (Secretary)
Cynthia Elliott	Marta Schantz
Oleksandr Faryga	James Vandeputte <sup>2</sup>

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Term ended in FY23; <sup>2</sup>Term began in FY23; <sup>3</sup>Resigned

During this fiscal year, the commission held hybrid meetings once a month, except in January, May, and June when the meetings were virtual. Additionally, the commission held monthly hybrid joint meetings and small working group meetings with the Planning Commission from October through December and held three joint small subgroup meetings in January. All meetings were open to the public, agendas and documents considered during the meetings as well as minutes of the meetings

and videos were posted to the EPC page on the City website:  
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/EnvironmentalPolicyCommission.html>

Throughout the year, the staff of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES), Office of Environmental Quality supported the EPC. The EPC wishes to express its thanks for the support and guidance provided by City leadership and staff.

### **3. EPC Annual Retreat**

The EPC held its annual retreat in May 2023. The focus included:

1. A discussion from Fairfax County Office of Environment and Energy Coordination, Alexandria’s Office of Climate Action, and the VA League of Conservation Voters;
2. A discussion and selection of EPC focus areas for next year as well as areas where EPC members felt they needed more information & understanding;
3. A discussion of legislative “asks;”
4. A review of FY24 Budget suggestions and Staff vision; and
5. A discussion on EPC’s vision for FY25, including ranking to determine funding levels for proposed actions.

### **4. EPC Activities and Accomplishments**

The following are some of the major activities and accomplishments of the commission during FY2023:

Following the EPC’s 2022 Annual retreat, the EPC created a list of actions they urged the City to take using the \$2 million dollars set aside by the City Manager for the FY23 budget. This included the creation of the new Office of Climate Action (OCA) and funding for 3 full-time employees – Climate Action Officer, Communication Specialist, and EV Planner.

From October through January, the EPC held meetings and small subgroup discussions with the Planning Commission on how to update the City’s entitlement process to better respond to the climate crisis and encourage the community to take advantage of tax credits/incentives from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Act, resulting in a joint letter to City Council. This action resulted in the OCA adding amending the Green Building Policy to the City’s Long Range Planning Interdepartmental Work Program to insure adequate funding and staffing with the final policy due by June 2024.

In November following a presentation to the EPC, it submitted a letter to the Planning Commission criticizing the Consolidated Sustainability Strategy (CSS) for the Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) project and urging them to better address the climate crisis and energy efficiency concerns before the Commission approves the project. This resulted in a significantly improved, more climate focused CSS submission in February with approval by the PC and City Council.

In November, the commission sent a letter to the City Manager detailing FY2024 budget recommendations with a focus on how the city and community can take advantage of the federal

funds and programs emanating from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

In February, the EPC and Planning Commission submitted a joint letter to City Council to address their concerns with the City’s draft Energy & Climate Change Action Plan.

In March, the EPC wrote a letter of support for the U.S. Department of Transportation’s 2022 Low or No Emission Vehicle & Bus and Bus Facilities discretionary grant application, which assisted in the City receiving grant funding.

In March, the EPC wrote a letter of support for the On-route electric Transit bus Opportunity Chargers project that supports the transition towards 100% zero emissions buses in the City of Alexandria.

In April, the EPC wrote a letter of strong support for the City’s 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation’s Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program.

Members of the Commission also participated in the following City commissions, committees, and advisory groups in the capacity of voting members:

- Strawberry Run Meetings
- Taylor Run Meetings
- Torpedo Factory Task Force
- Waterfront Commission
- Transportation Commission
- Ad Hoc Stormwater Utility and Flood Mitigation Advisory Group
- Eisenhower West Small Area Plan Advisory Group
- ECCAP Task Force
- EPC-Planning Commission Small Working Group, and
- Open Space Steering Committee

## **6. EPC Correspondences**

All EPC correspondences are posted on the EPC webpage:

[www.alexandriava.gov/environmentalpolicycommission](http://www.alexandriava.gov/environmentalpolicycommission)

1. Letter to City Manager Jim Parajon regarding FY2024 budget, November 3, 2022
2. Letter to Hilco Partners regarding its Consolidated sustainability Strategy (CSS) for the Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) project, January 3, 2023
3. Joint Letter from the Planning and Environmental Policy Commissions to City Council identifying opportunities to link the City’s climate plans and policies to the City’s entitlements approval process for new development, February 7, 2023
4. Submitted comments from EPC members and community members on the draft Energy & Climate change Action Plan (ECCAP), February 10, 2023
5. Letter to City Council regarding EPC concerns with draft ECCAP, February 10, 2023
6. Letter of support to Secretary Buttigieg for 2023 Low or No Emissions & Bus and Bus

- Facilities Federal Transit Administration grant, March 23, 2023
7. Letter of support to Congressman Beyer for On-route Electric Transit Bus Opportunity Chargers, March 30, 2023
  8. Letter of support to Administrator Bhatt regarding the 2023 U.S. Department of Transportation's Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant, April 17, 2023
  9. Letter to City Council and Manager regarding EPCs support of the IEN's report conclusions on Taylor and Strawberry Runs as well as lessons learned and future considerations from this Charlottesville based contractor-involved process, June 12, 2023
  10. Letter of endorsement regarding the Duke Street Transitway Advisory Group's recommendations, June 19, 2023

## **7. EPC Membership Recruitment and Leadership**

During FY23, three members left and five new members joined the commission. At the end of June 2023, the Commission had a full 13 members.

The Commission held its annual elections for FY2024 during its June 12, 2023, monthly meeting. Kathie Hoekstra, Michael Olex and Theresa Romanosky were elected unanimously as Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, respectively.

*Kathie Hoekstra*