

Old Town Business Association

Minutes from our regular meeting February 14, 2024

President Joanne Wunderly called the meeting to order at 8:48am. There were 25 people in attendance. The City of Manassas was represented by Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger, City Council Member Ralph Smith, and Economic Development Director Patrick Small.

After introductions were made the minutes from our January Winter Breakfast meeting were approved. A motion to approve was made by Ann Hempen and seconded by Jerry Martin.

Joanne began the meeting by thanking Chip Rohr for his efforts in encouraging participation in the Christmas Lighting Program. A request that dues be promptly paid was made. Joanne also stated that foot traffic in Old town was down (which is normal but not welcomed) at this time of year. She suggested that the “Shop Small” campaign should be continued to emphasize the importance of shopping local.

Nury Mena presented the Treasurer’s report. Currently we have \$8,73.13 in our Fulton Bank account as of February 1, 2024. Expenditures were \$390 for the Winter Breakfast. We still have outstanding expenditures to be paid once the invoices arrive.

Historic Manassas - Kristen Kiefer spoke about First Friday “Souper Bowl. This year there were 21 ‘stops’ for soup with 17 restaurants participating. This event continues to grow each year and is very popular. A very successful First Friday! Because there were so many people attending, a suggestion was made by Marc Hempen that the streets be closed to vehicular traffic for the safety of the attendees.

HMI is continuing to work with the Main Street program in an effort to attract more visitors to Old Town.

Manassas Museum/Harris Pavilion - On March 1, there will be an Art Show at the Harris Pavilion by Osborn High School Students. One can also check the City’s website to find out the many and varied opportunities available.

ARTfactory - Talya Conroy announced several upcoming events at the ARTfactory to include: Luck of the Irish Bingo on March 22, an Artist Talk with Dr. Yemonja Smalls on March 9 from 2 to 4 pm and the much anticipated Super Con, the Inaugural Fandom and Artist Convention on April 27 from 10am to 5pm with the Super Artist Fight beginning at 630. Talya also said that the Winter Session Catalog of classes (January 8 - March 31) are in full swing at the ARTfactory

Hylton Performing Arts Center - Tionge Johnson stated that the Hylton had a successful year. Next up at the Hylton are the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine and the Tray Wellington Band in the American Roots Series.

Manassas Police - A traffic analysis of vehicular traffic on Center and Church Streets that was done for six days (January 29 through February 5) was presented. Despite anecdotal observations, 85% of the traffic was traveling at or under the 25 mph speed limit. The number of vehicles on Center Street was 73,910 and on Church street 64,904. More speeders were noted on Church Street.

City of Manassas - Mayor Davis-Younger said that the City is now in Budget Season and that a video of the State of the City was presented to City Council. There have been 14 applications for the position of City Manager with 11 of those applying having met the criteria.

Featured Speaker - Cliff Blasius, President of Manassas and Manassas Park Crime Solvers spoke to the group about the history of Crime Solvers which began in 1976. Currently the program operates in more than 1,000 jurisdictions in the United States, Canada and in other countries throughout the world.

Our local chapter began in 1987 at the behest of Mark Wolverton, a Manassas City Police Officer. Manassas Park joined the organization in 2012.

Crime Solvers collect confidential tips about crimes and pass that information to the Police. If a tip results in an arrest, the tipster can receive a monetary reward. The amount of the reward is determined by the severity of the crime. All information is confidential and the tipster is not

identified to either Crime Solvers or the Police, but is assigned a case number for identification.

Members of Crime Solvers are ordinary citizens invested in a safer community. They do nothing to enforce the law or solve the case.

Cliff said that by putting the Crime Solvers stickers in the windows of your business, it alone will act as a deterrent and is akin to the Neighborhood Watch program in-that regard.

What's New:

Chip Rohr said that the 47th Annual Ducks Unlimited Gala will again be held at the Portuguese Center in Manassas and is usually sold out. Tickets are still available. The date is February 23rd.

Jerry Martin said that the upcoming 16th Annual Veterans Parade will honor Veterans of World War II.

Lisa Sievel-Otten said that Beacon Literacy, an organization that helps adults with English is having an event on February 24. Information can be found at beaconliteracy.org.

The 50/50 door prize was won by Jerry Martin.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 13th.

Jan Alten Secretary