

OTBA Minutes – April 10, 2013

Meeting began at 8:39 am

There were 19 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, the minutes from our last meeting on February 13 were approved by Kathleen Riley and seconded by Bob Chase. Our minutes are posted online at the OTBA website.

Nury Mena, OTBA treasurer was absent and President, Joanne Wunderly gave a brief synopsis and reminded members that the Christmas light bill from the City was paid (over \$2,000 for the lights) and that reimbursement requests for the building owners/businesses would be going out soon. Please pay your bill promptly. The Guide to Shops and Services is at the printers and will be available soon

Joanne Wunderly gave a brief re-cap of the advertising meeting on Monday, April 8. Joanne will make a comparative sheet of the information presented and cost so that a more informed decision can be made as to what would be the best course of action. She also said that a follow up meeting would be scheduled. She would notify the membership. Joanne also highlighted the upcoming events: Spring Sidewalk Sale– April 20, the Spring Gallery Walk – May 3, and the Railroad Festival – June 1.

HMI – Debbie Haight announced that posters for the Spring Cleaning/Sidewalk Sale and the Gallery Walk were available to post. Debbie also presented the new (and improved) Manassas brochure and thanked all who had a hand in making it happen. It cost \$20,000 and will be sent out in information packages. There is a pull out map with the listing of shops and services (similar to that in the Guide to Shops and Services) that can be removed and updated as needed. All photos were of Old Town. Debbie also announced that a Brown Bag Lunch Webinar on Monday, April 29 at 1130 a.m. at City Hall. The meeting will be about Events, Tourism and Economic Development. Please RSVP to HMI at 703-361-6599. Also coming up is the Old Town Hospitality Tour of all hotel/motel operators in Prince William County. The tour will begin at 2 pm and attendees will explore all that Old Town has to offer in the hopes that they will direct guests to Old Town.

Manassas Museum – Doug Horta spoke about the exhibits at the museum and announced that a new program – Museum on the Lawn would debut on Saturday, April 13 and would feature interactive/instructive activities to ‘entice shoppers at the Farmers’ Market to stay in town a little longer’. The museum will also be open on Mondays in May and through the summer. Doug challenged those present to join in the Bike Tours and stated that Cub Scouts could earn three badges with their participation. Doug also stated that August 23 – 25 will be a Civil War weekend with living historians, exhibits and demonstrations.

Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory – Marci Settle stated that the Summer Camp Program Catalogs are available and feature something for everyone – adults, teens and children at several locations. The upcoming Roof Top Production – Zara Spook is very entertaining and tickets are on sale. The last weekend in April will be the production of Seussical at Garfield High School and is a family oriented production.

Harris Pavilion – no report but Joanne stated that Anna Marie Robinson said that the pavilion is booked solidly for the warmer weather.

Manassas Art Guild –no report

Chamber of Commerce – no report

Welcome Center – Kathleen Reilly announced that the delayed display of cherry blossoms brought many tourists to the center in search of ‘something to do’.

Hylton Performing Arts Center –Katy Campbell announced that this weekend is the Arts Alive Festival, a free family outing that will feature arts and activities from 12 noon to 8 pm and will culminate with a free concert by the USAF band. Katy also announced that the 2013 –2014 season brochure is out and that many old favorites plus many new to the area performers are on the schedule.

Discover Prince William & Manassas (formally known as the CVB) – Wendy Vestfall mentioned that the website is going strong and that dining and shopping searches were the third most looked at pages. Wendy also announced that there are volunteer positions as well as part time positions available. On Wednesday, May 8, there will be a free breakfast at Potomac Mills from 9 – 11 to specifically discuss social media and how its effective use is very beneficial.

Manassas City Police –John Barnes reported that larceny is up by 8% in the city. He stressed that locking one’s car and keeping valuables out of sight are two ways to thwart potential theft. Calls for police assistance are up 17% while the response times to assistance calls is down. The skateboarders that use the pavilion are a continuing nuisance and calls to the non emergency number to report them at the pavilion are encouraged.

Manassas Fire & Rescue – no report.

City of Manassas Council member, Marc Aveni was our speaker for this month and he informed us about the budget process that the city is currently involved in. Mark stressed that the city needs to hear from constituents about what is desired and not desired and that attendance at the public hearing on May 22 or emails to your council members are two ways to make yourself heard. The budget is not yet approved. After the public hearing, there will be a work session.

Real estate tax revenue on residential and commercial buildings will increase property values rising (up 5%) and a .07cent increase of the tax. Fire and rescue levy is a separate. The CIP calls for many improvements: a new Baldwin Elementary School, correction of the flooding problems on Portner Avenue, Battle Street and Main Street, a new firehouse and the Main Street streetscape.

There are also many projected expenditures for which there is not a unanimous approval for by city council to include: funding for Economic Development and Revitalization, trash cans, parking districts, the Hylton Performing Arts Center, Historic Manassas, the Freedom Center, and the homeless shelter. One can find information about the budget and the proposed CIP on the Manassas City website.

What's New in your Business?

The Farmers' Market will officially open for the season on Thursday, April 11. There will be a ribbon cutting at the Harris Pavilion at 10 am.

Jan Alten, speaking for Chip Rohr, announced that Chip's Soccer Clinics at Linton Hall School are a great summer activity for children and grandchildren. This year marks the 35th year that Chip has held soccer camp.

Lu Harris reminded all that the Spring Gallery Walk will be May 3rd.

There was general discussion on trash cans and trash collection of commercial trash. It is felt that there needs to be a better solution than putting out one's trash in bags on Center Street for collection. It is unsightly and come summer, will most likely be smelly.

Also in a general discussion, was the need to spruce up for Spring – for example: remove any left over Christmas decorations or wreaths, sweep in front of your business, and take trash cans from the front of your business when not out for collection

There was \$26. Collected for the 50/50 and Lu Harris drew the winning ticket. Ted Leeman from Art Beat had the winning ticket

The meeting ended at 9:34 am.