

OTBA Minutes – June 13, 2013

Attendees were invited to begin the breakfast buffet at 8:30 am

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 am. There were 31 people in attendance.

President Joanne Wunderly made several announcements:

The advertising meeting that was held in April and the follow up meeting at which the presentations were compared, resulted in the decision to advertise Old Town in the publications Discover, Manassas Observer, Prince William Today and on Comcast Spotlight for the second half of the year. The cost will be about \$17,000 for a full year of advertising. Since we are doing a half year to begin with, the cost for six months would be half that amount. In January, a meeting will be held to determine the effectiveness of the advertising campaigns.

The Social Media 101 meeting was held on Monday, June 10th. Taylor Lenz of HMI led the class and instructed those present in the use of facebook, Twitter, tweets and HootSuite. These social media tools can bring exposure to your business. Taylor offered to help with businesses on an individual basis.

Show me Your Produce is an HMI/OTBA promotion to bring people into our businesses. Posters are being worked on and Annie Bleutt from HMI will get out more information as it becomes available.

The Prince William Attractions Dining and Value Guide advertising opportunity has been delivered to businesses for consideration. Rick Rice will do a follow up to see what interest there is in this promotion.

For the Civil War Weekend scheduled for August 23 –25, Joanne suggested that merchants might want to learn a little history about something that is sold in their store and give a little lesson to interested customers.

After introductions were made, the minutes from our last meeting on May 8th were approved by Kathleen Riley and seconded by Chris Finnie. Our minutes are posted online at the OTBA website.

Nury Mena, OTBA treasurer gave the treasurer's report. Our ending balance in Fulton Bank as of June 6 2013 is \$13,810.12.

HMI – Debbie Haight reported about many events, both past and upcoming. The Railroad Festival was a success and the addition of an antique coach car was a hit. Other events are the Manassas Wine and Jazz Festival on Sunday, June 16th on the lawn of the Manassas Museum, The Taste of Historic Manassas on Sunday, June 23rd from 12 – 5 at the Harris Pavilion (more than 500 tickets have been sold), The National Night Out on August 9th, and the Civil War Weekend on August 23–25. HMI also received a

Façade Grant Award that is a 2 to 1 match for any businesses sprucing up the appearance of their business.

Manassas Museum – Jane Riley reported that the Museum is open daily this summer and that we might have seen historical interpreters around town (not on Mondays). Their Toddler Time program is a hit. An upcoming book talk on Wicked Georgetown is scheduled.

Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory – Marci Settle reported that on Saturday, there will be two one act plays – comedy – at the Center and tickets are \$15. Marci also gave out post cards for the Summer Sounds Concerts and catalogues for the Summer Camp Programs for children 5 – 18.

Harris Pavilion – Anna Marie Robinson reported that the schedule is quite full and the newest addition Take out Tuesday Concert saw many people with their take out dinner or snacks enjoying the concert from 6 – 8 pm. Anna Marie expects this evening event to grown in popularity as the commuters getting off the train were interested in what was going on.

Manassas Art Guild –no report

Chamber of Commerce – no report

Welcome Center – Kathleen Reilly announced that there is a contest on Virginia.org that we should all enter. Kathleen also thanked HMI for the Social Media 101 course. The Welcome Center is a stop for tour busses and the Center is putting together information packets to give to the bus drivers.

Hylton Performing Arts Center – no report

Discover Prince William & Manassas (formally known as the CVB) – Wendy Vestfall mentioned that the Manassas, Prince William County and the CVB have joined forces for a brochure that will be distributed to Gettysburg Visitors Center in hopes to lure tourists 1 ½ hours south to Manassas. There will be Mid-Atlantic Travel Press Association Expo on the 11th and 12th of August and that the CVB will have a table at the event. Over 100 travel writers attend this marketplace for travel. Wendy also reminded us to update our information on the website and that they routinely get 100 thousand hits, mostly looking for shopping in the area.

Manassas Fire & Rescue – Brett Bowman reported that Manassas Fire and Rescue had lent support of two units to a townhouse fire in Woodbridge. Brett also reported that the Governor had established the first Virginia Annual Firefighters Award in honor of firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty or have been injured. Brett told a touching account of a fire captain in Texas who had been severely injured in a fire where a number of firefighters lost their lives.

Manassas City Police – John Barnes announced that the police were looking for a missing person and handed out fliers with a photo and description of the person, Lyle Foster, who is partially sighted and has memory issues.

City of Manassas – Commissioner of the Revenue, John Grzejka announced first quarter results which were disappointing. Retail in Old Town was down 11.5 % and the meals tax revenue also showed a slight dip.

Joanne Wunderly took a moment before our guest speaker was to address us to thank John Budesky, our City Manager, who is leaving Manassas. Joanne presented John with a framed print of the old city hall, done by my local artist, Mary Reilly. Mayor Hal Parish spoke about the search for Mr. Budesky and the very difficult decisions that faced him when he took the position – the Prescott house, the Capital Improvement Plan and convincing city council that change was needed. Both issues were resolved under John’s tenure as manager.

Councilman, Steve Randolph, a 25 year veteran city council member who has served with three city managers, also spoke about John’s ability to see the problems facing the city and to tackle them without hesitation. Steve spoke of “those who plant seeds but never see them grow”. Both John Budesky and John Grzejka have seen their efforts take fruit. John Grzejka retires shortly and has held numerous positions in the city to include: city council member, vice Mayor, and Commissioner of the Revenue.

Steve also gave a brief history lesson, with handouts, highlighting that Manassas is 100 years ago. At that time, Manassas had two strong banks, nine churches and no saloons. The needs of the city at that time were: a city hall, parks, electricity, a sewer system and sidewalks (at the time, there were wooden sidewalks and unpaved streets). The merchants had to be constantly reminded to ‘nail down the sidewalk planks that had loosened’. City council still relies on the businesses in Old Town to measure the heartbeat of the city and will often ask, “What does OTBA think of this”? Steve thanked the business community for their continued support.

Business announcements: What’s New?

Mary Reilly announced that Creative Brush Studio has again begun a community painting – this time of Liberia house that will be auctioned upon completion and the proceeds will go to the museum for Liberia’s restoration fund. All are encouraged to stop by Creative Brush and add a few brush strokes.

Janet of Fulton Bank announced that the bank is interested in helping businesses lower their merchant fees and is offering a review of current charges. Those who have an assessment will receive \$200. The promotion will end on June 30th.

Chip Rohr announced that his soccer camps for boys and girls at Linton Hall are heading into their 35th year.

Helen Santora of NOVA Music Center asked for help in finding a location for an open music instrument clinic for those interested in band or orchestra to know how to take apart musical instruments for repair and cleaning.

The 50/50 raffle was won by Terry of Olde Towne Hair Creations and she won \$26.

Jan Alten spoke about stopping by the Van Metre office and looking at the models for the townhomes that are going up on Center Street.

Chip Rohr announced that the house scheduled for demolition on Prescott Avenue has been saved

The meeting ended at 9:28 am.