

OTBA Meeting August 2, 2017 at City Tavern Grill

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 am by President, Joanne Wunderly. There were 32 in attendance.. Commissioner of Revenue Doug Waldron attended the meeting, as did Manassas City Council Members Sheryl Bass and Ian Lovejoy.

The minutes of our May meeting were approved by Elizabeth Bailey and seconded by Anne Hemen.

Joanne announced that there will be "First Friday" banners at the intersections of the closed streets on the barricades. Hopefully, having these banners will alert motorists that something special is going on in Old Town. In the past, there have been comments from residents that the closed streets and flashing blue lights of police cars signaled that there was a problem. Joanne also encouraged businesses to extend their hours during the holiday season. A sign up sheet will be taken to survey those businesses. A holiday promotion, "The Lights are on in Old Town" and a night especially for husbands to shop is scheduled near "Black Friday".

Christmas Lighting Program -Chip Rohr gave a report on the Christmas Lighting Program that adorns the roof tops of buildings in Old Town. The program is a partnership with the City. The Electrical Department installs and maintains the lights and the building owners or tenant /businesses pay for the electricity used. The City then bills OTBA for the replacement of bulbs, timers, extension cords, etc. used and in turn, OTBA has bills the individual building owners or business tenants.

The initial cost to light a building is billed to the building owner. There is no charge for the work to install the lights, only for the actual materials used.

To simplify billing of the maintenance of the lights, the City has proposed a flat fee depending on the size of the building:

Small buildings using 1 -2 strands of lights would be billed \$20.

Medium sized building using 3 - 5 strands of lights would be billed \$30.

Large buildings using 6+ strands of lights would be billed \$40.

Nancy Ingram commented that the City at Christmas time is a "Wonderland", a comment frequently heard from visitors.

Treasurer's Report - Nury Mena reported that we have \$8,582.81 in our treasury.

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Historic Manassas (HMI) - Debbie Haight spoke about the upcoming Civil War Weekend and if a business is willing to accept Civil War Notes (fake money given to the participants and re-enactors to 'spend' in the shops and reimbursed by HMI, to please contact her.

Upcoming events are 'Bands, Brews & BBQ' on September 9th, 'Steins, Wines & Spirits' on September 20th and the 'Fall Jubilee' will once again happen the first Saturday in October.

Centerfuse will host evening presentations that are informative to many areas of interest to business. Centerfuse is a place to work in an office environment of shared workspace.

Manassas Museum - Doug Horhorta reported that National Night Out was a success and thanked all who participated. Over 1000 people attended.

August will once again host the Blue and Grey troops in Manassas. Civil War related historical events and “conversations” between some opposing historical figures of the time will highlight attitudes of the time.

The annual Antique Auto Show will be held one again on the museum lawn on Saturday, September 16th.

Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory - Beverly Hess announced that a new kind of program will be held at the CFA. For the first time, there will be “Evening of Comedy” at the CFA on Saturday, August 12 at 8 pm. Seating is limited and tickets may be purchased on their website or by calling the CFA.

Beverly also announced the upcoming offerings for the season. The Pied Piper Theater will perform “The Wiz” at Metz Middle School in November and later on in the season, “Peter Pan” will be performed at the Hylton. The Rooftop Players will open with a musical comedy, “Nuncrackers” for the holidays and in February, a Mystery Dinner Theater will be offered. The last production of the season will be “The Addams Family”, an old favorite with a new twist.

Harris Pavilion - Anna Marie Robinson reported that the Harris Pavilion summer season was a great one with practically every available date taken.

Welcome Center on 66 - Phyllis Harrison mentioned that the “Blue and Grey Ladies” are frequent presenters at the Welcome Center and generate a good deal of interest in their period era costumes. Old Town Manassas is featured at the Welcome Center all year.

Hylton Performing Arts Center - Susan Landis announced that “Arts Alive!” will be held at the Hylton on Sunday, September 17 th and that there will be live performances and exhibits, visual arts on display, and hands on activities and demonstrations for all ages.

Susan also mentioned that favorable advertising rates are in effect for anyone wishing to advertise in the Hylton programs that are handed out at all performances.

Fire and Rescue - Fire Chief Rob Clemons noted that now the fire department is fully staffed and the newly hired Deputy Fire Marshall Mark Jones brings over 30 years of experience to the position.

At the recently held CPR instruction at the Harris Pavilion, 458 people were trained in CPR.

Positive feedback on the summer camps held by the Fire Department , the purchase of new apparatus , and the proposed site of the new fire department on Dumfries Road were other topics the Chief shared with us.

Police Department - Lieutenant Tina Laguna mentioned the department’s summer camp programs were very successful and that the camps are a positive way to build relationships with the Police Department.

National Night Out was an opportunity for the community to see what goes on behind the scenes in policing. The public is invited to an open house at the Police Department on September 16th. There will be tours of the facility from 12 - 5.

Manassas City Government -Economic Development Director Patrick Small announced that the City has purchased four train locomotive engines for out of doors art displays. Local artists will pain the locomotives and they will be on display in the city. Each is about 5 feet long and is 4 feet tall and are made of weather resistant material. O

The recent absorption of Discover Prince William into Prince William County has created new opportunities for Manassas to concentrate and expand efforts to keep tourists here.

Commissioner of Revenue Doug Waldron handed out the report on economic trends in the Old Town sector. The reporting period was April - June (second quarter). The good news is that Retail, Lodging and Meals revenues are up by 21.8 % over the same period last year. However, Doug did point out that not all figures are back from the state and a final accounting would come later.

Program - Suzanne Seaburg, a member of the City of Manassas School Board reported that our city schools have a population of 8,000 students in 9 schools. 62% of students are considered economically disadvantaged and 63% of our students speak Spanish as their first or second language.

There is expanded technology instruction in all schools. Music instruction is implemented at grade 5. At Osbourn, all students are loaned a tablet (to be returned at the end of the year) and much instruction is electronically delivered. Our schools have made great strides in recent years and Osbourn is in the top 16% of high schools in Virginia.

Schools will begin the new year on August 28th.

What's New in Your Business:

Bedrock Yoga made available 10% discount cards for classes. Summer events include Yoga Bingo and Facebook Summer Vacation Photo Contests. Both event participants can win either a free class or three free classes for the photo with the most 'likes' on Facebook.

The 50/50 drawing raised \$38 and the winning half was donated to OTBA by Doug Waldron. Proceeds from the 50/50 drawing help to defray the cost of breakfast at our meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.

Jan Alten
Secretary