

OTBA Minutes – SEPTEMBER 10, 2014

Meeting began at 8:37 am

There were 29 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, the minutes from our last meeting on July 9 were approved. Our minutes and treasurer's report are posted on line at the OTBA website.

OTBA treasurer Nury Mena was reported that as of August 31th, our balance at Fulton Bank was \$ 8,685.04.

Joanne Wunderly announced that the Sidewalk Sale is to be September 20th and encouraged all business to participate. "People love a sale and it is a good opportunity to get rid of things", commented Joanne.

Our October meeting will be center on a candidates' forum and the four candidates running for City Council have agreed to come. We would like to have questions that focus on issues that face our business community. OTBA members are encouraged to submit questions by email to Joanne or bring them by her store. We would like to pose 4 questions to each candidate who will have about five minutes to answer.

Joanne asked for feedback on the recently held September First Friday. A general consensus was that the music was far too loud and complaints were expressed by customers. It was expressed that the different genres of music was a good idea, but that several of the less amplified performers were drowned out by the loudness of the others. Kari Laparotti who is involved with the Promotions committee stated that the purpose of First Friday is to get people into town and that the traffic for First Friday is increasing. Those interested in being a part of the planning are invited to attend the Promotions committee meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10 am, currently meeting in Philadelphia Tavern.

Chip Rohr added a historical note that in years gone by, promotions were a joint effort and not solely an HMI or OTBA effort.

Joanne next brought up that there are some concerns about a business here in Old Town that appears to be catering to a less than desirable element. City officials have been notified and it is hoped that more aggressive policing will resolve this problem. Several people spoke about the business in question and expressed concerns.

HMI – Debbie Haight stated that the promotions committee is inclusive and all are welcome. Debbie addressed the concern about First Friday and 'kids on skateboards' that the thinking behind that decision was that kids needed parents to bring them.....and consequently would be enjoying First Friday. Other activities coming up: the weekend of September 13th – Bands, Brews & BBQ on the Museum lawn, there will also be a run for charity, and that evening, Casa will hold its annual fundraiser, "Evening under the Stars".

October 3rd is First Friday, followed the next day by the Fall Jubilee. Later in the month will be the Haunted Happening. The Fall Gallery Walk will be the theme for the first Friday in November.

Debbie also stated that Ambassador Program that was done for Old Town businesses will be presented to city employees to get them more familiar with what is actually in Old Town.

Manassas Museum – Doug Horhota announced upcoming events at the museum. The Museum at the Market will host the “Shenandoah Valley Civil War Era Dancers” at 10 am and 3 pm on September 13th. The 39th Edgar Rohr Antique Auto Show is scheduled to be held on the museum lawn on September 20th from 10 –3 pm. There will be a free book talk on September 28th. Continuing events are” Architectural Tours of Old Town homes, Bicycle Tours, and Historic Downtown Tours.

Center for the Arts– Sally Lay stated that the summer camps were busy and that auditions for Pied Piper Theater and the Rooftop Players are underway.

Harris Pavilion – no report

Welcome Center – Kathleen Reilly said that the Welcome Center is continuing the Virginia peanut promotion which has been popular to visitors at the center. Kathleen encouraged businesses to promote their businesses for free at the center. Please call her for more information.

Hylton Performing Arts Center –Susan Landis announced that the bluegrass duo, Daley & Vincent would be at the Hylton this weekend for a televised PBS program that will be nationally distributed. The session runs Saturday and Sunday with the Saturday performance being sold out. Tickets for Sunday are still available. Daley & Vincent will be cutting a CD at these performances. Susan also mentioned that the Hylton Extras Series will feature the Charlie Daniels Band on November 19th. Information on the Hylton Extra Series goes out first to Friends and subscribers of the Hylton before opening these events to the general public. The series is able to secure on short notice, acts that suddenly have a free date.

Discover Prince William/Manassas – Wendie Vestfall said that the tourism figures just released showed that TOURISM IN Manassas was up 4%. During the Civil War weekend five travel writers were here and reported that they “loved” Manassas and that their visit here was about the ‘experience’, not just the history. The first week in October there will be a bus tour from Iowa in the area.

Restaurant Alliance – Kari Laparotti reported that Restaurant Week (September 21–27th) will feature each restaurant offering something special. Kari also suggested that instead of just ‘liking’ something on Facebook, to please ‘share’ with others as a way to further get the word out.

Manassas City Police –no report

Manassas Fire & Rescue – Brett Bowman asked that on September 11th, we take a moment to remember those firefighters and first responders, military and, civilians who died during the attacks on our country. The Fire Department’s Smoke Detector Program is one in which smoke detectors are given out to residents in need, is itself in need of donations. October is Fire Prevention Month.

Veterans’ Day Parade – Ron Link, retired Army veteran, spoke about the up-coming Veterans’ Day Parade on November 8th at 11 am. Our Veterans’ Day Parade was the first one to honor veterans of the Cold War. This upcoming parade will honor the veterans of the Iraqi and Afghanistan conflicts. Three area veterans who died during these conflicts will be honored. Ron asked that we honor our veterans by purchasing an ad to acknowledge a veteran for \$10, or a full page ad for \$250. Ads can be purchased at their website, www.vetpar.org.

Presentation of the Christopher Company's re-development of the ABC lot on Prince William Street – John Regal presented plans for a 140 apartment building on that site. They have gotten Architectural Review Board approval. The Christopher Company also built The Courts of Manassas on Prince William Street and Grant Avenues where 10% of the residents use the VRE to commute into Washington.

Concerns have been raised over increased traffic at the intersection of Tudor Lane and Fairview Avenue and the Christopher Company has proposed to help with the costs associated with a “smart traffic light” at the intersection.

City of Manassas – Councilman Ian Lovejoy spoke about his quarterly newsletter and asked that any material for the newsletter not be time sensitive.

Patty Prince handed out the City of Manassas' Market Positioning Initiative pamphlet and said that at the end of September, there are plans for focus meetings and one on one meetings with the North Star company that has been hired by the City.

Patrick Small, the newly hired head of Economic Development was introduced and spoke briefly about his background and thoughts about the city.

Commissioner of Revenue, Doug Waldron presented the 2nd quarter figures for the city. The figures were still disappointing but there was some improvement in the retail sector.

Guest Speaker – Paige Read was to speak on tourism but since the meeting had run longer than usual, it was decided to have her speak at another date rather than rush through her presentation.

General Discussion –

Chip Rohr mentioned that the train depot parking lot is open now and that the owner of the lot and the city had reached another 5 year agreement.

There was \$70 collected for the 50/50 and Ron Link won the pot and stated that he would donate it to the Veterans' Day Parade.

Our next meeting will be October 15th when we have the candidates that are running for City Council at our question and answer forum.

The meeting ended at 9:56 am.