

**Old Town Business Association
General Meeting**

September 11, 2019

The meeting was called to order by President, Joanne Wunderly at 8:50 am.

There were 36 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, Nury Mena gave the Treasurer's Report. As of August 31, we have \$ 10,742.80 in our treasury. We are still receiving monies owed for the 2018 Christmas Light program. The OTBA Board has proposed that rather than collect in arrears, we should request payment when you sign up to participate. Chip Rohr has again agreed to chair this project and requested that he needs help in contacting some 70 business/building owners.

Approval of the July minutes was the next order of business. OTBA does not have a meeting in August. The minutes are on line. Heather from Olde Towne Vet made to motion to approve and Nury Mena seconded. The motion passed.

Joanne made a few opening remarks:

September 21st is the Sidewalk Sale. Those interested in participating can put items for sale outside to attract customers. Old Town will be buzzing that day as the Edgar Rohr Annual Antique Car Show will be held on the Museum Lawn. This event always attracts people to Old Town.

The Manassas Museum together with the Manassas Women's Club Annual Christmas House tour will once again have refreshments at historic Libera. Last year, many Old town businesses participated by having a display showcasing their businesses. This is not a "sales" event, more of an informational showcase. The Annual Christmas House tour is usually held on Sunday following the Merry Old Town events the first weekend in December. This year the first weekend in December is the 7th & 8th. Sunday the 8th is the Merchants' Open House and as such, many merchants would not be able to participate. Discussions are underway to see if moving the House Tour to the following weekend is feasible.

More to come regarding this event as there are many factors that need to be taken into account.

The Guide to Shops and Services is at the designer and will be going to the printer once reviewed.

Bob Phibbs, the Retail Guru who has written a number of books and is nationally recognized, has been contacted and plans are to have a seminar in City Council Chambers. There is no cost for this event. If interested, businesses can have a one on one consultation for a nominal fee in the afternoon following the presentation.

The most recent First Friday was extremely successful. Old Town was virtually mobbed with attendees. Police Chief Keen said the crowds were very well behaved and despite concerns that alcohol freely carried on the streets would result in problems , there were none. A review of the event is underway and minor tweaks will be ongoing.

Historic Manassas - Rebekkah Raze spoke about:

The Annual Fall Jubilee is on Saturday, October 5th. More than 150 vendors have signed up to participate. There will be a Pumpkin Patch and a Dog Show in addition to the usual activities. Businesses can reserve a 10' x 20' space in front of their establishments with a \$200 refundable fee if they occupy the space with a display or goods to sell.

Manassas Parks and Recreation - Museum/Harris Pavilion - There was a discussion about the removal of the historical informational signage of events that had been around Old Town. Chip Rohr encouraged the quick replacement of the signs as tourists to Manassas use these signs when in town on a walking tour. Chip reported that the removal of the sign on West Street between Church and Center Streets has resulted in a significant drop in business to Tummy Yum Yum. When people stopped to read about the events on that sign and turned to continue their tour, they would almost always stop and make a purchase.

Three signs have been re-erected.

Center for the Arts - Beverly Hess reported:

The current catalogue of classes is in the mail.

Local artist, John Hartt's exhibit "Carnival of the Absurd" will be on display from September 14 through October 14.

The upcoming play from Rooftop Productions is the deliciously frightful Mystery Dinner Theater production of "Monster Mash Murders" - on October 25th and 26th at 7 pm. The event will feature a catered dinner by Georgetown Caterers and a cash bar. Attendees are encouraged to dress in their 'monstrous best' for the occasion. Tickets are on sale now.

Rooftop Productions will present "Elf, The Musical" for their holiday performance. Play dates are November 30th through December 15th on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 pm and on Sundays at 2 pm.

Pied Piper Theater plans for production of 'Alice in Wonderland' the first weekend of November at Metz Middle School and in January at the Hylton, 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'.

Welcome Center on I 66 - Kathleen Riley distributed tourism marketing information and instructions on how to get a listing on virginia.org. One can get a free listing on Virginia.org - the Commonwealth's official travel and tourism website. - All of Virginia's Tourism's marketing drives travelers to Virginia.org where consumers can find and book your attraction or business and learn what your locality has to offer.

Hylton Performing Arts Center -The season opener at the Hylton will be on September 21st with the "Hot Sardines" in performance. This group recently played in New York.

Manassas Police -Officer Lance Rust reported that five new officers are on patrol and addressed the questions posed at our July meeting concerning customers needing too park briefly on Center Street to load bulky or heavy merchandise that cannot be carried, delivery trucks that block streets and other traffic concerns. Chief Keen said that two beer delivery companies basically "own the market" and ticketing trucks would result in a detriment to our restaurants.

Manassas City - Council members Michelle Davis Younger and Vice Mayor Pam Sebesky were in attendance.

Economic Director Patrick Small expressed thanks to Senator Jeremy McPike for his assistance in getting special event licenses for alcohol to be consumed in public for certain events in Old Town.

The City is partnering with HMI to host a 50th Anniversary Party for Lockheed Martin on the Museum lawn on October 12th. Lockheed Martin is the City's largest employer with 1,100 employees. This is a community event.

Virginia Tourism released 2018 figures citing that visitors who travel more than 50 miles to reach Manassas have spent 72.7 million dollars (a 2.3% increase over 2017), tourism was responsible for 583 jobs with an annual payroll of 12.3 million, and brought in 1.9 million in tax receipts. This upward trend shows gains for the 9th consecutive year.

Program -Lt. Chris Shields of the Manassas City Police Department gave a report on a proposed ordinance for special events and use of public grounds. As it currently stands, it is possible that several events happening in Manassas on the same day throughout the City could impede the police from their duty to serve and protect.

The proposed ordinance would require more advance notice for larger events, address the need for noise control to be consistent with OSHA's "action level" for noise sustained over an eight hour period, and improve mobility in the downtown area for residents as well as tourists.

Lt. Shields made this presentation to City Council in August and would like input from the business community.

What's New?

Bennett Whitlock invited all to Whitlock Wealth Management's 25th anniversary celebration at CenterFuse on September 25th from 5:00 to 6:30 pm.

Sheryl Bass announced the Fall session at BedRock Yoga will begin on September 18th and had class schedules on hand. Bedrock Yoga is also working with the Manassas City Police Department to address the stress that those who serve us undergo and ways to help alleviate that stress.

There was a 50/50 raffle today and Blane Perry of Sinestral Brewery donated his winnings of \$ 45 to the Christmas light program.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.

Our next meeting is October 9 th

Jan Alten
Secretary