

Old Town Business Association

Minutes from our meeting on October 13, 2021

President Joanne Wunderly called the meeting to order at 8:40 am. There were 23 people in attendance. The City of Manassas was represented by Mayor Michele Davis-Younger, Council members Tom Osina and Teresa Coats-Ellis and Economic Development Director Patrick Small.

After a few brief remarks, introductions were made. Joanne announced that to encourage new members, all businesses in Old Town would be invited to our next meeting in November and to our annual breakfast meeting in January. We do not have meetings in December and in August.

Joanne mentioned that both First Friday and the Fall Jubilee were successful events.

Our much delayed Guide to Shops and Services is in its final stages of refinement. Initially, all businesses will be listed. Once 'open season' ends, **only** those businesses that are members of OTBA will be listed. The guide is given to visitors to Historic Manassas as encouragement to patronize OTBA member businesses. In the past, we have printed and given out more than 15,000 guides each year. It is an economical way to get your business name out there and into the hands of interested people.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Nury Mena. Currently we have \$8,148 in Fulton Bank.

Historic Manassas (HMI) - Melissa Williams said Haunted Happenings would be from 10 - 12 on Saturday, October 30. This is a popular event for children and prizes will be awarded for costumes. Also in the Halloween Spirit, Three Monkey's Pub is having a Zombie Bar Crawl on Saturday, October 16th. Attendees are encouraged to don their finest Zombie attire and join the Zombie hoard as they march to C.J. Finz.

The 25th anniversary for the opening of Manassas Clay is this year. Stop in and congratulate Jane and Fran for being an integral part of Old Town!

Gingerbread enthusiasts can submit their gingerbread creations for the annual Gingerbread House Contest that is on display throughout Old town in December. Submissions open on November 25th and close on December 18th. Winners will be announced on December 21st.

ARTfactory - Executive Director Beverly Hess stated that finally, there is a return to live performances. *Sweeney Todd (the Demon Barber of Fleet Street)* will be performed by the Rooftop Productions in the Gregory Theatre at the Hylton Performing Arts Center for six shows over two weekends. It opens on October 22nd.

The Pied Piper Theater will perform *Fidler on the roof Jr.* at Metz Middle School on October 16 and 17. Pied Piper will also perform *Cinderella* in January at the Hylton.

The ever popular model train show will be set up by the National Trackers the weekend before Christmas.

Christmas Chaos is this year's holiday offering and Beverly said that in November will be a night of improv. Dates to be announced.

Manassas Museum - no report

Manassas City Police - Officer Lance Rust addressed concerns that have been brought to the attention of the police. Marijuana smoking is permitted to be purchased and consumed or smoked in the private of one's home. Smoking marijuana in public is not permitted and can result in a ticket violation. Multiple violations become a misdemeanor offense. Police have to actually see someone smoking in public before any action can be taken.

We have seen an increase in homelessness and the police cannot take action unless there is a complaint from the property owner. Officer Rust encouraged those present to join the Trespassing Initiative which will give the police the authority to deal with the issue.

A general discussion followed concerning the downside effects of events in Manassas. Specifically, increased crowds, the abundance of trash, the lack of bathroom facilities resulting in public urination, and the consumption of alcohol beyond the posted boundaries were the major issues discussed.

The discussion segued into the presentation by Economic Director, Patrick Small. Mr. Small stated that the City is becoming a victim of its own success.

Mr. Small suggested that additional cardboard trash receptacles be placed around town and that businesses could replace the plastic trash bags and store the trash until pick up. He also suggested additional portable toilets, more signage and encouraged restaurants to have private security at the door to discourage people entering and carrying in alcohol.

His other suggestions included filing permits for music that required 45 days in advance to allow the City and the police to better plan for needed officers. We have been relying on old formulas for these events but they have gotten bigger and a re-think is needed.

A suggestion to form a task force to include the planners and the businesses that are affected by the events was positively endorsed by several people.

The 50/50 raffle raised \$46 and the winner, Chris Sellers donated his winnings back to OTBA. Thank you Chris!

Our Next Meeting will be November 10, 2021
There is no meeting in December

Jan Alten
Secretary