

OTBA Minutes – NOVEMBER 6, 2013

Attendees began the breakfast buffet at 8:15 am

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 am. There were 27 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, the minutes from our last meeting on October 9th were approved by Chris Finnie and seconded by Mary Reilly. Our minutes along with the Treasurer's report are posted on line at the OTBA website.

Nury Mena, OTBA treasurer, was on vacation and so no report was given. President Joanne Wunderly reported that we have about \$11,500 in our account at Fulton Bank. Joanne also mentioned that Discover will feature Old Town on the front page of their December issue with the tag line – Shop, Dine and Unwind.

Election of OTBA officers has been rescheduled for January. Mary McGlone has been attempting to recruit interested parties in running for office but to no avail. Please, if you or someone you know is interested in being more involved with OTBA, let Mary know. Please also discuss with the person you nominate to see if there is interest in serving as an OTBA officer. Due to extenuating circumstances, we have decided to postpone elections.

Lou Balboni has agreed to coordinate the Christmas Lighting program again this year.

Chris Finnie usually has copies of the newsletter out for the taking at the meetings but reported that she is out of ink for her printer. The newsletter is on line.

Joanne mentioned that OTBA Board will take up the suggestion that OTBA send a donation to the Manassas Volunteer Fire Department in memory of Rick Ratcliffe, who recently passed away. Rick was a long time business owner in Manassas and a friend of OTBA. He will be missed.

Our next meeting will be January 22, 2014.

HMI –Debbie Haight announced the December schedule of events:

November 16 – Gingerbread Houses are to be out and in the participating stores

December 6 – The tree lighting and Santa comes in on the VRE

December 7 – The annual Christmas Parade. There are 5 Golden Tickets out in the candy bars for sale. At the time of our meeting, 2 had been claimed.

December 8 – The Old Town Merchants' Open House.

There will be carriage rides for three weekends in December.

Manassas Museum – Jane Riley reported that the Museum has a full schedule of activities. Authors will be at the Museum for book signings, the Museum will host an Open House on December 6th, on the night of the tree lighting, on December 14, there will be an evening tour of Liberia. Jane also mentioned the Womans' Club Annual House Tour on Sunday, December 8th. Tickets are for sale in a number of shops in Old Town.

Center for the Arts at the Candy Factory – Sally Lay reported that “Nonsense” had been sold out on the previous Saturday night and that the last performance would most likely sell out as well. The art exhibit in the first floor gallery is Fred Markham’s works in oils, Scenes from Kentucky. The Pied Piper Theater’s production of “Willie Wonka” is scheduled for two weekends in November 16th, 17th 23rd, and 24th at Metz Middle School . Saturday performances begin at 7 pm and Sunday performances at 4 pm. The next juried art exhibit will be “Off the Wall” – featuring the art work of high school students from all local schools. The exhibit will run 6 weeks.

Harris Pavilion – no report.

Manassas Art Guild –no report

Chamber of Commerce – no report

Welcome Center – Kathleen Reilly was at a conference and a representative from the Welcome Center thanked HMI for having a booth at the center. With the holidays in mind, Virginia.org lists businesses for free on the Virginia Travel Post page.

Hylton Performing Arts Center –no report

Discover Prince William & Manassas (formally known as the CVB) – Wendy Vestfall mentioned that the deadline for advertising in the 2014 guide is December 15.

Restaurant Alliance – Debbie Haight announced that the next Taste of Manassas will be in the spring and that Restaurant Week will be in the spring as well.

Manassas Fire and Rescue – no report.

Manassas City Police – Bill Hutchinson announced that there has been progress made about the complaints about the pedestrian crossings and the traffic lights on re/yellow flash. There are plans to remove the flashing lights in the crosswalks and replace with reflectors. On order are two additional green yield to pedestrian signs. Traffic lights have returned to the usual pattern.

City of Manassas–Our new City Manager, Pat Pate, was introduced to the group and expressed his pleasure at being in Manassas.

Featured Speaker – Sean Mc Mananus of the Herndon Police Department and Giovanni Varahona of the Gang Task Force spoke to us about gang activity in the area and what

to look for if you suspect gang activity or see graffiti that you might think is gang related. The Regional Gang Task Force was created in 2003 by Congressman Frank Wolf. Northern Virginia areas are linked with the FBI, ICE and the Virginia State Police. The task force teaches and trains law enforcement and civilians on gang prevention and intervention.

Typically, gang members will mark their territory or claim new territory with their 'colors' and distinctive markings. They are not shy about marking their territory. They want it to be known that they are in the area. Taggers will typically mark buildings with their initials, random letters. Taggers are vandals. In either case, photograph the tag or symbol before you remove the tag or paint over it and notify the police.

MS-13, a particularly violent gang, has been in the area but is not as strong as it was several years ago. Members are usually in the 14 - 18 year olds. Gang activities usually involve drugs and prostitution.

Businesses were advised to be more alert during the up-coming holiday season and to report any suspicious activities to the police. You can request a free assessment of your security risks. At no time, should one try to confront a suspicious person. Call the police.

Ann Hempen asked if the gangs were in the high school. There is nothing to indicate that they are recruiting juveniles to do their work at this time. There have been 'false claiming' reports by juveniles to boost their reputations as 'baddies'.

Bob Chase asked who pays for the removal of tags. If it is on city property, the Department of Public Works will clean up the graffiti. If it is on private property, keep receipts for reimbursement.

Jon Way (Manassas City Councilman) asked if the tags meant anything other than vandalism. If it is a gang tag, then the purpose is to announce turf ownership.

Mary Reilly asked what charges are associated with vandalism. Depending on the monetary value of the clean up, it can be either a misdemeanor or a felony charge.

Chip Rohr asked how to contact. The police non emergency number (703-257-8000) and ask for Lt. Hutchinson.

Additional Featured Speaker - John Regan of Land Acquisition spoke about proposed plans for the redevelopment of the ABC Photo Processing site located on Prince William Street between Main Street and Fairview Avenue. The site is 3 ½ acres and has been vacant for more than 5 years. Their plan calls for 141 apartments in one four story building with off street parking in the rear. The design is sensitive to the historic homes along Fairview Avenue. The estimated rental of the 900 sq. ft. apartments is about \$1,500. per/month. Mr. Regan showed a site plan and rendering of the project and was available for questions after the meeting.

Business announcements: What's New?

Chris Finnie announced that her store, The Whimsical Galerie would be closing on December 14th. Chris is looking forward to a new life after retail.

Patty Prince invited all to the ribbon cutting for the Main Street Project on November 19th.

Mary Reilly announced that her Old Town Calendars for 2014 are in stock.

Chip Rohr announced that Ducks Unlimited was not responsible for the permanent residency of the Canadian geese in the area and that they eat the food that migrating ducks depend on. There have been sightings of Bald Eagles in the area.

The fifty-fifty pot was \$42 and Jon Way held the winning ticket. Jon kindly donated his winnings to OTBA.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.