

## OTBA Minutes – NOVEMBER 12, 2014

Meeting began at 8:40 am

There were 27 people in attendance.

After introductions were made, the minutes from our last meeting on September 10 were approved by Mike Flynn and seconded by Bob Chase. Our minutes and treasurer's report are posted on line at the OTBA website.

OTBA treasurer Nury Mena was reported that as of October 31st, our balance at Fulton Bank was \$ 7,587.88. Some bills recently paid: OTBA provided ice cream for the Sunday Ice Cream Socials at the Harris Pavilion and the bill was \$613, Haunted Happening costs were about \$500, and the cost of having police for the First Friday event was another \$325. We have some outstanding bills of \$996.50 which will leave us with a balance of \$ 6,591.38

Joanne Wunderly shared the sad news that OTBA member, Richard Guy, had passed away and that Anna Marie Robinson's father had recently died.

ABS Graphics is once again doing our Guides to Shops and Services which should go to print before December. LuAnn Stevenson deserves a **huge** Thank You for all her hard work on the brochure.

Lou & Dave Balboni have been busy coordinating having the lights atop the buildings in Old Town for the holidays. We are still waiting for a few very delinquent payments from last year.

**HMI** – Debbie Haight stated that chocolate bars with a “Golden Ticket” inside will once again be available for sale at many businesses in Old Town. There are 5 golden tickets. Winners who find one will ride in the Christmas Parade with Santa.

Debbie also announced that a new promotion for Banner Art will give budding artists an opportunity to have their art displayed on the banners that are attached to the light poles. The contest is open to residents from the greater Washington Metro area. Committee members, Mary Reilly, Patty Prince and Debbie Haight will select the finalists. Applications are on line at the HMI web site.

**Manassas Museum** – Doug Horhota announced that the new exhibit “What's Under Your Feet” will showcase artifacts that have been excavated during renovations around the city and tell a rich history of Manassas. Also at the Liberia Mansion, there have been new discoveries of Civil War graffiti.

A joint effort with Prince William County for promoting the area “After the War” is in the works.

**Center for the Arts**– Sally Lay stated that the musical “Honk” will be at Metz Middle School.

The Rooftop Theater will feature “Moon Over Buffalo” on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm. Tickets are available in advance and a cross promotion with are restaurants enables theater goers to enjoy a free dessert with a ticket purchase.

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, in the evening, will be “Deck the Walls” at the Center for the Arts. The evening is a fundraiser and art sale.

**Harris Pavilion** – no report. The ice rink is now open for the season.

**Welcome Center** – Information about the Virginia Tourism Marketing Leverage Program was on each table and OTBA members are encouraged to apply.

**Hylton Performing Arts Center** –Susan Landis announced that a new marketing person has been hired..

Upcoming events are “Nutcracker” performance by a number od dance companies, the ever popular Chanticleer Vocal Group and other community Christmas programs.

**Discover Prince William/Manassas** – Wendie Vestfall said that a free– lance writer has been hired who has expertise on our area and will offer advice on dining and shopping in the area for the next several weeks. Three weeks ago, there was a photo shoot of Old Town featuring a family of four in Manassas and Prince William.

**Restaurant Alliance** – Debbie Haight is working with Center for the Arts on additional cross promotions. There was a nice ad in the recent issue of Northern Virginia Living featuring the restaurants in Old Town.

**Manassas City Police** –Officer Steve Neely reported that there were no real issues to report on.

**Manassas Fire & Rescue** – Brett Bowman reported that it has been quiet and slow – a good thing! Brett advised residents and business owners to get their heating units checked for the winter months ahead.

Chip Rohr noted that for those who have gas logs, to have them serviced regularly and cleaned.

**City of Manassas** – Representing the City today were Pat Pate, City Manager, Councilman Jon Way and City Media Specialist, Patty Prince.

News from the City: Bonds for Baldwin School have been sold and bids for construction are going out. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2015.

The City approved the construction of Old Town Heights, upscale residential apartments on the site of the old Journal Messenger building.

The Van Metre project and the new town homes being built on Prescott Avenue in the City should add more 'feet on the street'.

New electronic signs at the entrances to the City are up and operational. Their use will be for marketing the City and for traffic control and emergency notices that are related to the City.

Patty Prince announced that long time City Council Member, Steve Randolph, has been appointed Vice-Mayor for the duration of his term and that he is to be the Grand Marshall of the Christmas Parade along with Meg Carroll.

### **Open Discussion:**

Joanne reminded us that there is no meeting in December and that our next OTBA meeting will be the last Wednesday of the month in January.

Bob Chase of Prospero's reported that his building owner, Gary Belk, had expressed concerns over the accumulation of trash in the alley way between the Taft Building and Zandra's.

There were several comments about the recently held First Friday (the Fall Gallery Walk). First mentioned was that the blustery, cold weather had been a factor in attendance. Also mentioned was that closing Center Street when there was nothing going on Center Street – especially during the darkened Fall and Winter months – made the street feel foreboding and dark.

Suggestions were made that a crossing guard instead of street closures would be a better solution.

There will be no First Friday in January.

Bob Chase commented that the Veterans' Day Parade was well attended and thanked Debbie Haight and HMI for the bunting that decorated the reviewing stand.

Debbie Haight spoke about the American Express Shop Small promotion that will highlight small businesses on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Debbie is also coordinating an effort that will allow for five winners of Old Town \$100 gift cards. Businesses who choose to participate will be given the supplies necessary.

Mary Reilly said that there is a committee to select buildings with ample wall space for a series of murals to be painted on the buildings of local and regional scenes.

The 50/50 drawing was won by Bob Chase and it generated \$25 for OTBA.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 am.