

Old Town Business Association

Minutes from our meeting on November 10, 2021

President Joanne Wunderly called the meeting to order at 8:45 am. There were 22 people in attendance. The City of Manassas was represented by Mayor Michele Davis-Younger, Council members Tom Osina and Lynn Forkell Green, City Manager Pat Pate and Economic Development Director Patrick Small.

Minutes from our October meeting were approved. The motion was made by Debbie Haight and seconded by Patty Prince.

After introductions were made, Joanne made a few brief remarks:

Joanne thanked Chip Rohr who once again has gone door to door to encourage all businesses to participate in "Christmas Lights in Manassas", the program that has the tops of buildings lit for the holiday season. The cost to each business is \$20, \$30 or \$40 depending on the size of your building. OTBA reimburses the City and we bill each business.

The Guide to Shops and Services is in its final stages and plans are to have it out to all businesses soon. The first printing of the guide will include all businesses in Old Town. Subsequent printings will include only members of OTBA.

The reports on the Veterans' Parade were rave reviews, and to the delight of attendees, a Bald Eagle flew overhead. Manassas is the only Northern Virginia locality to host a Veterans' Parade.

Joanne mentioned that a task force meeting was held at 3 Monkeys to address the issues concerning events and First Fridays. We are a victim of our own successes. Noted was a snippet from a letter from long time business owner, Dave Balboni of Ashby Jewelers, that years ago, it was hoped that we might have 1,000 attend our Fall Jubilee. Now attendance hovers around 10,000!

Nury Mena, our Treasurer was absent and her report was given by Joanne. We currently have \$8,250 in the treasury.

Historic Manassas (HMI) - Melissa Williams said November 27 is the last day for the Farmers' Market.

Upcoming events in December are the Tree Lighting on December 4th, the 75th Annual Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 5th, and the Holiday Market on December 11th. There will be no Santa Train this year as VRE declined to participate. There will be free carriage rides in Old Town beginning December 7.

Manassas Museum - Echoes, the Manassas Museum Store will be moving to the Train Depot inside the Visitors Center while the Manassas Museum undergoes renovation.

The Holiday Open House at Liberia House will be on Sunday, December 12th from 1 to 4 pm.

ARTfactory - Candace Penders said that the ARTfactory has a busy season of entertainment.

On November 20th will be an evening of improvisational comedy - "*An Evening with the Pun-demics*".

In the Merchant Gallery is “*Wild Webs - Freeform Fiber Art exhibit*” featuring creations by local artist, Karen Ballard and the U.S. premier of Prudence Mapstone’s collaborative freeform crochet and knit artwork, “*50 Years of Flower Power*”, an amazing 50 foot long wall hanging that was created by the efforts of 200 artists from all over the world.

A Gingerbread Workshop for children and adults to create gingerbread masterpieces will be on December 5th.

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 beginning November 27th - a play about a dysfunctional family’s holiday antics.

“*18th Annual Off the Wall*” a juried art exhibit and competition by high school artists entries must be submitted by November 21. The exhibit will be in the Merchant Gallery December 15 - January 22, 2022.

Harris Pavilion - no report but noted, weather permitting, ice skating will begin soon.

City of Manassas - City Hall will begin to move out departments for the much needed renovation of the workspace. When built, Manassas had some 20,000+ residents, today more than 42,000 people live in Manassas!

Veterans Parade - Jerry Martin reported that the parade, the 12th, was the largest held. The VetPar, a 501C 3 organization contributes \$200 to each high school band that participates.

Manassas City Police - Police Chief Doug Keen was our featured speaker and addressed the concerns that were brought up at our last meeting.

Chief Keen encouraged all to contact our legislators about reinstating ‘equipment violations’ (lights and mufflers on vehicles) which at this point cannot be the reason for police to stop and ticket a car.

The time for events to end have been considered to be a factor with some of the issues. Reopening the streets at 10 pm versus midnight will alleviate some of the ‘street party atmosphere’ issues as will better coordination of concurrent events, multiple bands, ample trash receptacles and portable toilets.

Chief Keen said that he prefers a ‘soft approach’ as opposed to a heavy handed response.

Council Member, Tom Osina thanked the police for the job they do and asked for a little patience as City Council reviews the entertainment license procedures/requirements.

Chief Keen encouraged all to be more aware of crime prevention and said that the police will come to any business to assess the best practices to prevent crime. Locking cars, doors, closing garage doors, adequate lighting are all preventive measures that are not always taken. One can call the non emergency number or email a request for an assessment.

The 50/50 raffle raised \$46 and the winner, Candace Penders won \$23. Proceeds from the 50/50 raffle help to offset the increased cost of having breakfast available. Thanks to all who participate!

Our Next Meeting will be our Annual Breakfast Meeting in late January 2022
There is no meeting in December

Jan Alten
Secretary