

East Ocean View Civic League
Minutes of meeting held April 5, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by John Greene, President.

Treasurer's Report was given by Jeffrey Lewis:

Total Assets	\$3,483.09
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$3,483.09
Net Income	\$-515.34

A detailed statement is available on request of John Greene, President

Police Report

Officer Cogswell reported that the crime stats for our area were about the same as last month and that violent crime rates are way down. Most of the crime is minor property crime. He also reported that the 19th Bay Street Block Party went well with a great turn out. Plans for the Multicultural Explosion on 4th Bay on April 22nd are coming along very well, thanks in particular to Steve Zollos and Kip Malone.

Two prostitutes were identified and police are in process of removing them from area.

Questions from the floor concerned thefts from boats at Bay Point Marina. We are urged to report all crimes.

John Amiral, candidate for City Council

John asked for and was given permission to pass out a flyer promoting his candidacy. He did not address the audience.

Speaker, State Senator Ralph Northam

In a lengthy discussion, to include Q&A, Senator Northam reported that the 2012 legislative session of State Congress recently adjourned, but will need an "over-session" to tie up the loose ends on the budget. As he wrote in his OP ED piece for the Virginian Pilot, that this has been a frustrating year in Richmond for him. During his candidacy and now when he meets with the people of his district, he hears their concerns center around jobs, the economy, the Chesapeake Bay, energy policy, transportation, and education. When he goes to Richmond, the issues are social in nature: guns, women's reproductive rights, which are all divisive issues that took time away from discussing issues important to the citizens. Senator Northam regrets the polarization of these issues, however they are close to finishing up the budget.

One of the issues here was K – 12 education. Northam explained there is a general fund and a non-general fund. Money in the general fund goes towards K – 12 education, law enforcement, and to health care. We have been through a terrible recession over the last four years and anything that pulls money out of the general fund hurts health care, law enforcement, and education. Initially the money that came out of the Governor's budget was below the level of funding in 2007. They worked through

that and made adjustments. Education needs to be a key focus. We can't let children get behind or get behind other states and countries. They go back to Richmond on April 18th to finish the budget.

Another issue Senator Northam has worked on locally includes sea level rising, which is *not* due to climate change. Whether you believe in climate change or not, the sea level is rising, and the Chesapeake Bay is up 14 inches. It is predicted that over the next 200 years it will be up 2 feet more, and we *must* consider this information in our planning as Hampton Roads is particularly vulnerable. Senator Northam introduced a resolution to have a study done by VIMS to look at sea level rise and help in planning for projects in Pretty Lake, Mason Creek, and Granby--areas that have a serious flooding problem. We do not have money in either the City or the State to address and correct these area problems and, in order for Feds to give us money, we need this study by VIMS.

Another area of concern is the Chesapeake Bay (his boyhood home is on the Eastern Shore). He has watched the demise of the Bay. Some causes include the runoff from the farms on the Eastern Shore and septic systems that feed into the Bay. A lot is going on behind the scenes and Sen. Northam is hopeful progress is being made.

Blue crab population was at an all time low in 2008, but is now headed in a positive direction. Sen Northam went to VMRC, which sets regulations, and they stopped winter dredging of crabs. This did not sit well with the watermen but was necessary and they agreed to get rid of winter dredging. He also opened up a sanctuary in the southern part of the Bay where no crabbing could occur during spawning season--also not very popular--but at the blue crab population has doubled since 2008. He also put in the 'Ghost Pot' project and paid watermen to go out and pick up over 10,000 abandoned ("ghost") pots left in the Bay, which was a great help in cleaning up the Bay. Crabbing has now improved to the point that the watermen are having trouble finding pickers.

Oyster restoration is also key to the health of the Bay. One oyster can filter up to 50 gallons a day. The State has been putting money into oyster restoration each year. They have a one-on-one federal matching funds for this project. They have also been chipping away at the flounder size limit, which is now 16 ½ inches. Senator Northam is also a big "friend of Menhaden," and has fought this battle for years. They sustain eco-system of the Bay. Many believe it is the most important fish in the Bay.

The most important issue in our area is Transportation, for several reasons. First of all, safety. Right now it would take three days to evacuate the area. Secondly, quality of life. It is too difficult to get from one area to the other. Our roads are embarrassing. The pot holes are horrible. Third, the military has said that, if we're not going to do something about our roads, they are not going to expand. Last, if we lost our maritime industry we would be in serious trouble economically. The natural geography in Hampton Roads is ideal for this industry with the deep water harbor. With the Panama Canal opening up in a couple of years there will be even bigger boats hauling cargo. If we don't accommodate them, others will: Charleston, Savanna, New York. Thus, transportation is a *very* important issue.

Because the State has no money, we've effectively "kicked the can down the road" year after year. There is some maintenance money but no construction money for years. They did put about \$4 billion dollars into transportation to jump start the situation. This money was borrowed in the form of bonds. This year, after much debate, they have "pretty much nothing." The only thing the legislators could agree upon was to name the roads after companies, which is *not* going to raise the kind of money needed cannot be raised this way.

So now we have the Midtown Tunnel issue. It is a public/private venture, but public money is so small (and is borrowed money) so we need tolls. The Elizabeth River Crossing Company is the private part of

this project and must have a guaranteed return of 13 ½ % yearly, which Sen Northam says is a terrible, terrible plan. He wrote an OP ED piece for the paper stating just how he felt about it. We have a couple of options – 1) scrap the whole deal or 2) back off some of the other projects the Governor has for 460 and bring that money into the Midtown Tunnel project, which will still be a significant toll. We need to find a sustainable source of revenue to fund transportation, but there's little political will in Richmond to do this. We need a gas tax or a retail sales tax but the bottom line is we cannot keep borrowing money the way we have to support transportation.

Questions/comments from the members:

“OP ED was right on about political leadership. We are casting adrift here and we need political leadership to advance the cause – you were right on point.”

SN: Northern Virginia is a major player with lots of control. Hampton Roads needs a caucus to promote issues in our area. We need to support a gas tax. \$1/gallon would bring in a \$1 million a year. North Carolina pays \$0.20 gallon tax higher than ours but pays about what we do per gallon at tank because the petroleum companies adjust rates to keep states close in price. We are throwing money out the window by not making our gas tax higher.

“We need to consider other opportunities of transportation: The TIDE, bicycle trails, etc.”

SN: To build a tube across the river without a rail line is non-sensical.

Old Business

Tommy Smigiel's EOVC Civic League-centered Steering Committee on Neighbors Building Neighborhoods is having its first organizational meeting on April 15th. John Greene will report out in May.

The block party on 19th Bay Street sponsored by Bon Secours, New Life Christian Church, and others, was a *huge success*. There were over 300 people fed and there were volunteers from the USN, WAVE church, New Life Christian Church, landlords, and residents. Barclay Winn and WALMART donated mulch, flowers, and plants. The goal of this continuing project is to organize neighbors to look out for their area and their neighbors. There were food, games, and activities for all. The City fully cooperated by sending fire trucks and police cars to participate in the event. Kip Malone is the block Chair and will join the Civic League.

John Hadfield, Board of Directors member, has completed the last phase of rewriting the Civic League By-Laws. The final document was submitted to the membership and the new parts read aloud. There was a motion, which was seconded, to forego the reading of the whole document. The By-Laws will now be presented to the Civic League members in May to vote upon.

New Business

Jim Smith and Sharon Litton-Smith of the East Beach Sandwich Shop made a presentation to promote interest in their shop. Not only do they have a variety of great sandwiches and salads, they also sell beer, art work on consignment, and other craft items on consignment. They are extending their hours for the summer months and will deliver your orders to you for your boat, the beach, or just to enjoy. Jeff Woodhouse is their chef. Please come and give them a try.

As mentioned earlier, The Multicultural Event will be celebrated April 22nd on 4th Bay Street and is co-sponsored by Bon Secours and Judy Boone Realty. There will be 15 to 20 food vendors and all kinds of activities. There will be parking on 3rd Bay and the park there for this event only.

The building of Pump Station 88, near the bridge, is scheduled to be built this summer. There were two renderings of the building, and members were asked to choose between the two. John Greene asked for a show of hands and will report our choice.

Members were asked to fill in a survey of their thoughts on EOV before they left. We will hear the results at a later meeting. Amanda Scuppin and Deborah Lutz are handling this project.

Code violations. The best way to get results from the City is to call [Norfolk Cares](#) with your concerns: 664-6510. There is also a form to report complaints on the City web site. You *do* get a response!

Ms. Jillian Nolan of the Virginian Pilot and Mr. David Speer, Civil Engineer for the City of Norfolk, will be our speakers in May.

Our newsletter is available on line. eovcl@eovcl.org Check out all the other information on the site.

A motion was made, and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Ann M. Freeman, Secretary