

East Ocean View Civic League

Minutes of meeting held January 3, 2019

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

Ann welcomed everyone to a 'full house', due mostly to the fact that Mayor Kenny Alexander is our guest speaker. It was a treat to have the room comfortably warm, too, as a result of the renovations to the Rec Center. Ann reminded members that, as it is a new year, dues are due. They are \$15 for an individual, \$25 for a couple.

Since this is a new year, we have a new slate of Civic League Board members. Mayor Alexander swore in the following Board: President, Ann Bolen; Vice President, Steve Chamberlain; Treasurer, Jeff Lewis; Secretary, Ann Freeman. Members at Large: Juanita Snead, John Hadfield, Jimmy Carter, Alice Webley, Chris Obery, Monique Maruskowitz, John Cook, and Lee Williams.

[John Cook will finish Gerry Bunting's term and Lee Williams will finish Michael Phelps term.]

Treasurer's Report was given by Jeff Lewis

Total Assets	\$3396.40
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$3396.40

There is cash on hand (approximately \$1,400) for the Gerry Bunting fund. Ann Bolen will meet with Christy Bunting, Gerry's widow, to determine the best way to honor Gerry.

A detailed financial statement is available on request of Ann Bolen, President.

Police Report

Officer Fulcher reported that our area had 36 reported incidents this month. Larceny from vehicles is still our major problem; also there were 4 robberies, there have been two arrests in connection with these robberies; and there were two violent crimes. Arrests have been made. The police have recently written many tickets for inoperable autos in the area.

Officer Fulcher said the police are working with the Seniors Community in the area. The Senior Community is now located in the Rec Center. The police are also meeting with the Norfolk case manager dealing with the homeless in an attempt to develop a proactive approach in handling this problem.

Officer Fulcher reported that the Youth Academy at Bayside Elementary is going well. Police are working with 4th graders once a week and feel quite positive about this program. He also said that Coach Dwight was preparing his team for the game, Cops with Kids, in the Spring.

New Business

Ann Bolen reported that Mr. and Mrs. Salter were here to ask for the support of the Civic League in their bid to get a variance from the City to build their new home located at 3650 East Ocean View Avenue. They are tearing down an old cement house at the corner of 17th Bay Street and East Ocean View Avenue and wish to build a three story framed home in its stead. The reason for the variance is that the lot is 25 X 125 and the City requires a letter from the Civic League to support this request. After a short period of discussion the members voted to approve this request.

Guest Speaker: Mayor Kenny Alexander

Mayor Alexander's presentation gave an overview of where Norfolk is now, its challenges and its successes. He asked Councilman Tommy Smigiel to join him up front and together they focused on East Ocean View. Mayor Alexander commented that his political life began as a Civic League President. Tommy's began as the Civic League Vice President here in East Ocean View. Tommy stated that, although he did not initially support Mayor Alexander as mayor, he now says he has a great respect for him and they have developed a strong working relationship. They both concurred.

Mayor Alexander stated that the revenue was a real challenge for the City in 2018 because of the downturn in revenue which comes mainly from real estate taxes. He commented that there is no appetite to raise taxes hence, the conundrum: does the City raise taxes or continue to provide services. 27% of home assessments went up last year. He reports that Norfolk is at the top of its own debt ceiling. Mayor Alexander did report that people are moving to Norfolk and that is reassuring. He stated that Norfolk does a poor job of selling itself and that needs to improve.

As far as where the money goes, public education receives the lion share of the budget, \$37 million; after that public safety receives the next highest share. Mayor Alexander reports we have the lowest crime rate in years. The City continues to work with the elected School Board but one ascertained there are definitely tensions between the City and the School Board. One of the Mayor and Councilman's goals is to improve student scores on national testing. The City built five new schools last year and are looking at several others that are in dire need of replacement/repair. The Career Technology (CT) School is a priority. The focus at this school will be project based learning. There are 29,000 students in the Norfolk School system.

Mayor Alexander reported that unemployment in Norfolk is under 4% which is lowest unemployment in a while. Unfortunately, unemployment is in double digits in the most depressed parts of the City. They are working to address this.

As for transportation, Mayor Alexander reports that Norfolk is the most multimodal city in Virginia. We have light rail (issues here: needs to be expanded to other parts of the City), a ferry system, an airport, as well as the usual vehicular traffic and issues. In response to a member question: there will be no roundabout in EOV as it is too expensive. He stated Norfolk needs \$600 million for infrastructure. We need to get funds from the government and work with the Army Corps of Engineers.

On East Ocean View: Tommy Smigiel arranged for the City Council to take a bus tour of EOV and experience the highs and lows of the area. Tommy works hard to get attention for EOV projects and that comes from the Mayor. He wants East Ocean View to be an area where people want to come and not run from. The City's goal/aim is to plan smart/develop smart. Some recent developments in the area are: two breweries are coming; we now have Villa Marina; the new Veterinary clinic on EOV Ave.; the Tern development is about to begin; Waterview Senior Housing is projected; the Pretty Lake apartment complex, and the new Surf Rider. EOV is the area with the highest incomes in Norfolk.

In response to questions from the members:

Proposed Casino: proposed on the 20 acres next to Harbor Park which is projected to produce strong revenue. It could mean \$25 million a year in cash flow. It is one building operated by a council and with a Board. It appears to be a clean operation with good management. Tommy stated if we do not develop it Virginia Beach will.

Covered bus stops could be built (by HRT) if enough use was determined at particular stops.

Curbs needed in EOV. They would help with nuisance flooding but need drains near them to alleviate the runoff. Tommy Smigiel said this problem was pointed out to the Council during the bus tour. Cost would be \$5 to \$8 million dollars per Bay Street.

If cars are parked in front of your home, call it in to Norfolk Cares. A second option is permit parking but that also has its problems.

Top Infrastructure Projects: Brambleton/ VA Beach Blvd. underpass(pumps are on order for this problem); these projects are in no particular order - The Hague; Ohio Creek; Pretty Lake; EOV Flood Gate. The financial problem is that if you spread resources to several projects at one time, no real progress is made.

Old Business

Juanita Snead reported on the very successful *Cookies with Santa* that the Civic League supported in December. Juanita read a card of thanks from the Rec Center staff. There were dozens of cookies, cocoa, and each child received two gifts.

Pastor Rodney, from the Storehouse, also thanked us for our support over the holidays. They provided as many as five gifts to 75 children and distributed food for a meal at home.

Update from Gabriel Phelps, Civil Engineer, City of Norfolk

Phase 5, 19th Bay and Pleasant Avenue. They are projecting their sewer and water pipe replacement will be completed by early Spring 2019. Then they will pave 19th Bay Street (albeit without sidewalks and gutters) and then they move to 20th Bay Street, stating they will not block access to the Rec Center. This project is due to be completed by the summer of 2019. Because of threatening teenagers, the Police now monitor the site. This presence seems to have alleviated the problem.

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

Please check our website regularly (www.livingeov.com) for information about our area and what is occurring here.

Submitted by,

Ann M. Freeman, Secretary