

## Larchmont–Edgewater Civic League

Meeting: Spring 2007, February 22, 2007, 7:30 – 9:00pm

Attendance (approximate): 38

Location: Larchmont United Methodist Church

Civic League website: <http://www.larchmontedgewater.org/>

### Synopsis of Meeting:

- Announcements from Dave O'Dell:
  - Commissioner of the Revenue report and Virginia Arts Festival booklet being passed around.
  - 26April Dinner program at local restaurants for Access (assists of HIV and AIDS)
  - Norfolk Garden Tour – Thursday 27 April, on Jamestown and Cambridge Crescent, and at The Landings (new condos at Bolling)
  - Civic league meeting to be scheduled for May. Possible speakers are Sharon McDonald (Commissioner of Revenue) or Thelma Drake
  - Newsletter. Mechanical problems with printing caused late delivery. Apologies.
  - Agenda:
    - PACE, Officer Routon
    - ODU police, Sgt Coppage
    - Barclay Wynn, city council.
- PACE. Officer Routon.
  - ODU and Norfolk police departments joining together to work issues in the surrounding neighborhoods. Auto larceny, parking issues, 48<sup>th</sup> & 49<sup>th</sup> St code sweep, etc.
  - Bolling, near apartments. Motorcycle chop shop identified and shutdown. Recovered 10 motorcycles. LoJack ID. Arrests made. The 'garages' behind the apartments are independent storage units for rent.
  - No serious or violent crimes in the neighborhood recently.
  - Flyers available at the front on neighborhood block watch program and personnel/home safety. Home inspections done free of charge by police department.
  - Answers to questions from the audience:
    - Graffiti on Hampton Blvd Bridge is not gang related. No gang related graffiti in the neighborhood. Program available to businesses to clean up graffiti.
    - Youth selling candy should have some paperwork from the school or church. Businesses must have badge/license.
    - Speeding on Hampton Blvd is being worked. Working truck issue also.
    - 3 precincts are working well together.
    - Will look into speeding on Lexan and Jamestown; Jamestown also between 2-3am
    - Speed limit on Colley at 25 vs. 30 on Jamestown. Citizens must make request for change through City traffic engineering.

- Police Unity Tour upcoming. Raise money to maintain police memorial in DC for fallen officers, police museum, and counseling for families.. Bicycle trip from Norfolk to DC. Flyers at the front. Also selling merchandize – contact Connie Routon, 773-3003, constance.routon@norfolk.gov
- ODU Police, Sgt Coppage.
  - ODU police are fully certified police officers. If Norfolk needs assistance then ODU can respond. May be first responder. May see officers in the neighborhood.
  - Working together to make adjoining neighborhoods safe, eliminate college parties that disturb neighborhoods, address parking issues, etc.
- **Motion** from Dave O’Dell: Donation of \$250 to Officer Routon for the Police Unity Tour. Second. Vote by show of hands: All for. **Approved.**
- Barclay Wynn, Superward Councilman.
  - Hampton Blvd corridor study. Results coming soon. Will begin funding improvements, etc.
  - Traffic on Hampton Blvd.
    - Making progress with Port Authority and Maritime Association. Looking at creative ways to improve situation, or eliminate truck traffic all together by: conducting a baseline study on container truck traffic; consult with ODU for further study; study NIT to PIT barging; resolve empty container issue by using computer program to eliminate unnecessary returns to port; asking truckers to voluntarily stay off Hampton Blvd.
  - Property taxes.
    - Assessments gone up due to the popularity of Norfolk. Looking at significant cut to rate. Looking at change that would help residents and tax commercial property differently. Looking at an index rate so major jumps would not happen, go up no more than a certain percent each year.
    - Homestead exemption applies to first 20%. May not go into effect until 09. Applies to single family, single occupant, not applicable to commercial.
    - Must balance the needs and wants of the City. Old city requiring may repairs to libraries, \$100M in mandated sewer and water repairs, etc.
    - Tools to make tax changes not available at the city level. Must be taken to and approved by State.
  - Answers to questions from the audience:
    - Rate cut determined by looking at needs, decisions on projects, mandates, etc. Tough process. Every penny in the rate equates to \$1.5M in revenue.
    - 50% increase to assessment vs. spending increase. Deferred maintenance has caught up to us. Trash trucks, schools, municipal bldgs, etc. over 30 years old. State mandates are not fully funded. Also had many bad, flat years in the 80-90’s.
    - SPSA. Regional trash was set up in the 80’s and expires in 2018. Right thing to do then. Fees gone up dramatically. Suffolk does not

pay as host city. Now need to look at long term needs. Get cities involved.

- Sewer fees. Constant battle to meet new regulations. Add expense.
  - Index rate. City can change to this without state permission. Change is difficult. Need to come up with a realistic number. Most need relief but must keep the city moving forward without negatively affecting the budget.
  - Building of many condos downtown with increased tax base. Seeing adjustment in all real estate lately. High rises are more risky because once it starts, it must be completed. Unlike condos like The Landings where individual buildings can go up as units are sold, can absorb a slow down.
  - Condition of Libraries. Committed to improvements. Again, balance. Fighting budget constraints. Can't fix as fast as we would like.
  - Comment from audience: Don't understand why a 40 year old building doesn't last when living in an 80 year old house. Hope council is looking at this.
  - Comment from audience: Town Hall meeting report did not speak to concerns. Glossed over issues such as taxes. Need to make budget process more visible.
  - Budget process. Reacting to request. Looking at publishing in Compass in simple, readable form. Q/A sessions.
  - Elizabeth River bike trail. Working. Going behind library. Route is Redgate to Blue Bird Park, go on fringes of bird sanctuary, back to Powhatan, 43rd, Bluestone. Improvements to Brambleton Bridge will include bike trail.
  - Closing Announcements from Dave:
    - Newsletter. Volunteers are needed to deliver the civic league newsletter. Not all areas are covered. Delivery is normally two weeks before the meeting. Contact Laurie Chapman.
    - Flyers on town hall meetings at front.
  - AARP providing free tax service to low and middle income (other restrictions apply) at the Norfolk Fitness and Wellness Center. Announcement in newspaper. Can make appointments. Contact GM Ziller.
- Meeting adjourned.
  - Notes by Vickie Jones.