

Larchmont–Edgewater Civic League

Meeting: Spring 2006, March 30, 2006, 7:30 – 9:00pm

Attendance (approximate): 74

Location: Larchmont United Methodist Church

Synopsis of Meeting:

- Announcements from Dave O'Dell:
 - Corner Stone Café has provided refreshments for the meeting. Located in Lambert's Point, 41st St. Breakfast, Lunch, Catering. M-F 7-3, Sat 9-2.
 - Next meeting on Thursday, April 20th, Mayor Fraim will discuss proposed ODU lacrosse stadium in the area behind WHRO and tennis court area.
 - Reports from Commissioner of Revenue at front for viewing.
 - United Methodist Family Church. Open house on Sat, 4/8, discussion on foster care. 12-2pm. 815 Baker Rd
 - Maury Booster Association send thank you letter for civic league donation. Letter read aloud. Money used to purchase world maps for social studies class.
 - Agenda:
 - Sebastian Stant discussed a needed skateboard park in Norfolk. Article in the most recent civic league letter on this young man's efforts. Resident of the neighborhood.
 - PACE - Officer Routon discusses recent crime in the neighborhood.
 - City Council candidates, Andy Wallach and Terry Whibley, speak.
- Sebastian Stant
 - Skateboards need to safe place to ride and practice in Norfolk
 - Currently practicing in places that don't allow skateboarding such as ODU and the tennis courts.
 - Park at Mount Trashmore is far away. Many under 16 and cannot drive.
 - Petition circulating. Looking for signatures to support a park in Norfolk such as the upcoming Lambert's Point Recreational Park, Northside or Lafayette Parks.
 - Looking to submit request to the City before July to be incorporated in the upcoming budget.
 - Petition signing event this Saturday, 4/1, at 1140 Rockbridge Ave. Free lemonade.
- PACE
 - Officer Routon reviews crime stats – 4 hit and run, 1 larceny – bike, 1 larceny – car, 1 narcotics – in conjunction with traffic stop.
 - Man on a bike near Bazemore's harassing residents. Taken care of, but has returned based on comments from audience.
 - High residential burglary rate in Lambert's Point.
 - 1 additional patrol car in area. Total of 2.
 - Now operating with 3 patrol divisions, means smaller area and faster response time.
 - Skateboarders at tennis courts behind WHRO. Not allowed. Need a safe place to go.

- Norfolk Citizens Academy, 3/30-6/15. Insight into what the police do, codes, zoning, etc. Can still sign up. See civic league website.
- Unity Tour. Upcoming bike tour from Chesapeake to DC to raise money for the police memorial in DC. Officer Routon participating. Starts 5/10. His goal is to raise \$3000. Fund raiser at DC Chases at 7pm, 4/8.
- Responses to questions from the audience:
 - Number of cars for sale at Jamestown and Hampton. There is a limit on the number of cars one person can sell. Tracking. Not illegal to sit there. Must have something wrong to be considered an abandoned vehicle such as expired stickers.
 - Will look into complaint about speeding on Jamestown and on Hampton Blvd bridge.
- Dave O'Dell
 - Last year the civic league gave donation to Officer Routon for the Unity Tour. Dedicated officer providing support to our neighborhood. Treasury in good standing to allow a donation this year.
- **Motion** from the floor: \$200 donation to the Unity Tour. Second. Vote: All for (verbal). **Approved.**
- City Council candidates given time to speak and will then answer questions from the audience. (One candidate not in attendance)
 - Andy Wallach.
 - Explains boundaries of Ward 2.
 - Background. '69 college grad. Economics at Hopkins. Navy Intelligence Officer. Navy brought him to Norfolk. Civil service job. Financial planner. 31 years in Norfolk. Married, two grown children.
 - Why running. Before new year read an article in the paper about officials taking trips paid by lobbyists, etc. Considered lack of concern for voters. Not a lot of open dialog between council and residents. Not real democracy. Need discussion. Good development downtown but what's happening to the lower income families?
 - Leadership background from the Navy. Business background from education and financial business.
 - Norfolk is \$1 billion business. Annual report on where the money was spent is not provided to residents. Example – football stadium at Lamberts Point was budgeted at \$1.2M but understand it increased to \$3M. Why?
 - City Council voting. How can voting consistency be 0-7 or 7-0? Can't get that kind of agreement in his own house.
 - Real Estate assessments. (Hand out provided to audience, Code of Virginia 58.1-3321. Effect of rate when assessment results in tad increase; public hearings.) Increase requires public hearing. Were the requirements met? Should not have increased as it has per requirements of the Code.
 - In favor of development but must keep the ambience of the neighborhood.

- 5000 people wanted a public vote on the Bay Oaks Park. Council used taxpayer money to fight against the vote.
 - Concerned about special interest groups and relationship with council.
 - Terry Whibley.
 - Excited about efforts of Sebastian Stant for a skateboard park. Remember driving her own son to VA Beach.
 - Real passion is the school board.
 - 34 yrs in Norfolk. Masters in education. Medical school at EVMS. 18 yrs as OBGyn.
 - Norfolk has been good to our family. Children went to public school and have done well. Feel need to give back through education and teaching.
 - 4 yrs as chair of the school board. Proud of Norfolk public schools. #1 urban school in the nation.
 - More needs to be done through city council.
 - Not all students are prepared to come to school. Early education makes sense. Economic sense. After school programs are needed. 2-5pm for middle school – need somewhere to go. Computers, libraries.
 - Talk about “coming home to Norfolk” but others won’t come if schools and work force has not prospered.
 - Health of Norfolk – not enough recreational facilities and wellness programs. Parks declining.
 - Central Hampton Blvd planning meetings. Involve the entire community. What should the area look like? Long range planning.
 - Keep citizens involved. They are stakeholders.
 - Can’t fix all problems but will respond and listen. Key for council member.
 - Concern about taxes. Absolutely support reduction.
 - Under funding of libraries, facilities for homeless and mentally ill. Teachers – lowest starter salary in the area. Police and fire.
 - Want to see what services are going to be cut. Do the best with the tax dollars. Good steward.
 - Questions from the audience: (synopsis of comments)
 - **Tax assessment.** Went up 100%. Called tax assessor to see if a mistake was made. Raised everyone in the area. Understand tax wind fall to the city. 2 working adults. \$400/month to pay tax increase. Horrendous.
 - Terry Whibley: 24% is exorbitant. Untie the hands of the city officials. Need legislation. Don’t give break between residential and commercial. Realistically can’t pay teachers and cut taxes.
 - Andy Wallach: Anything about \$1.00 or \$1.02 is a tax increase. Concerned about schools. Example: 6 recreational boat slips at \$220k from Federal govt, but \$400k has to come from Norfolk. Was a benefit cost analysis done? Light rail – everything has a tail. Start with a public hearing.

- **Bay Oaks situation. Position on Imminent Domain.**
 - Andy Wallach: Citizens have the right to vote on the Bay Oaks issue. Imminent domain - is sometimes needed. Have right to get back.
 - Terry Whibley: Bay Oaks - support a better process. Support referendum. Imminent domain - wouldn't support property for commercial use or gain.
- **Vision for Norfolk.** In the 18 years here, the city has improved. What is your vision of where Norfolk will be in 10-15 yrs?
 - Terry Whibley: "A Healthier Norfolk." Neighborhoods, schools, economic growth. Want our kids to group up here. People in Norfolk care. We don't always agree, but with informed citizens, we will get there.
 - Andy Wallach: Much progress in Norfolk. Improvements need to spread out from downtown. Roland Park area – retirees only get 1% increase/ year in income. People in Norfolk need to be able to stay in Norfolk. Start on one block of a neighborhood and go to the next. Slowly bring up the entire city. If you take down housing, then the city needs to work with the people that are displaced. Can't end homelessness if you don't provide low income housing.
- **Trucks on Hampton Blvd? Vision for libraries?**
 - Andy Wallach: Trucks – need to establish priorities. Not a stadium, maybe not a golf course. Libraries – Good idea to combine with TCC.
 - Terry Whibley: Trucks – Why can't we push the issue to make trucks go around? Won't work until the third crossing. Libraries – Strategic plan. More than books on shelves. Look at Pretlow – intellectual vacuum downtown. Major priority. Life long learning.
- **Public hearing and interest groups.** Went to a public hearing and there were many interest groups there. You all have their ear all the time. This was the private citizen's time. Lots of balloons and pretty things (distraction). We need the truth. Remember who you are there to represent.
 - Terry Whibley: Fiscally responsible. On school board, we listened and worked hard together. Come back to neighborhood. Talk to others. Experience.
 - Andy Wallach: Letter of the law and spirit of the law is different. I'm open, honest, and very upfront with you. I've been the civic league president for 2 yrs. When a stadium was proposed in Lafayette Park, I organized a group and fought for what was right.
- **School board.** Reason for leaving? Why move to city council? (specific question to Whibley)

- Terry Whibley: Greatly care about education. Can't do any more with the school board due to appointment ending. Not enough is done to work together. Long range planning needed. 40+ year old for school buildings. School board budget hearing at the end of May. Need more shared services, maintenance, etc. with others. Early childhood development important.
- Andy Wallach: I'm an independent candidate. I volunteered to run.
- Dave O'Dell thanks the candidates for coming.
- Meeting adjourned.
- Notes by Vickie Jones.