

# The Old Town Crier

The Monthly Newsletter of the Old Town Civic Association, Inc.

## Announcing the May Program and Notice of the Meeting

**DATE:** Wednesday, May 9, 2007  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m., Socializing with Neighbors; 7:30 p.m., Program  
**LOCATION:** The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street

### PROGRAM AGENDA:

- (1) **POLICE REPORT: LT. JAMIE BARTLETT**
- (2) **ALEXANDRIA'S FY 2008 BUDGET: BUD MILLER**
- (3) **HUNTING TOWERS/TERRACE DEVELOPMENT: PAT MANN**
- (4) **HISTORIC CONFERENCE (4 & 5 MAY): JOHN JOHANSEN**
- (5) **WILKES STREET TUNNEL UPDATE: JOHN JOHANSEN**
- (6) **FREEDMAN'S CEMETARY: PAM CRESSEY**
- (7) **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT: MIKE HOBBS**

### ALEXANDRIA'S FY 2008 BUDGET

Bud Miller of Alexandria's Taxpayers Union will present a recap of the City's 2007-2008 Budget.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee is pleased to submit the following slate of nominees for election to terms beginning at the June 2007 Annual Meeting:

#### OFFICER NOMINEES

		<b>TERM</b>
President	Townsend Van Fleet, 26 Wolfe Street	2007-2008
Vice President	Linda Couture, 505 Duke Street	2007-2008
Treasurer	Michael Zarlenga, 314 Princess Street	2007-2008
Corresponding Secretary	Susan Brita, 420 Princess Street	2007-2008
Recording Secretary	Douglas Thurman, 804 Duke Street	2007-2008

#### DIRECTOR NOMINEES

Central	Timothy Elliott, 422 South Fairfax Street	2007-2009
South of Franklin	Michael Adams, 712 South Union Street	2007-2008*
North of King Street, West	Poul Hertel, 1217 Michigan Court	2007-2009
North of King Street, East	Jonathan Aaronsohn, 821 Rivergate Place	2007-2009

\*Nomination to complete an unexpired term due to a vacancy.

## **CONTINUING DIRECTORS**

At Large: John Johansen, 221 South Pitt Street 2006-2008  
South of King Street, West: Russell George, 220 South West Street 2006-2008  
(Messrs. George and Johansen are completing the first year of their two-year terms.)

As provided in the Bylaws, additional nominations of eligible members may be made by nomination from the floor at the May 9, 2007 Members Meeting, if supported by a written petition signed by five Members eligible to vote and accompanied by the written acceptance of each such additional nominee signifying his or her willingness to be a candidate, and received by the Corresponding Secretary (Susan Brita, 420 Princess Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314) in person or at her regular address prior to the May meeting. The election will take place at the June 13, 2007 Annual Members Meeting, among the nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee and any additional members nominated from the floor at the May meeting; no other nominations (including nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting) are in order.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Board and other members of the association for their advice and suggestions for its work, and to its nominees for their agreement to stand for service to OTCA and to our community.

### 2007 Nominating Committee

Michael Hobbs, 419 Cameron Street  
(Chairman)

Vincent "Chip" Carlin, 1302 Prince Street (West)

Miles Holtzman, 204 Oronoco Street (North)

John Johansen, 221 South Pitt Street (Central)

Michael Sauls, 14 Alexander Street (South)

## **OLD TOWN WATERFRONT WALK**

OTCA's Waterfront Committee is conducting a walk of our historic waterfront on two separate dates to solicit additional ideas from the membership regarding what improvements need to be made to the waterfront. The first walk will go North of the Torpedo Factory on Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> of May at 1000 AM. The second walk will occur on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May at 1PM and go South of the Torpedo Factory. The meeting place is at the Gazebo off Cameron Street behind the Torpedo Factory on the City Dock.

## **OLD TOWN SAFEWAY**

Old Town Safeway has new grocery carts! Have you been to the Old Town Safeway lately? The size of the grocery carts has gotten smaller as the store bought new micro size express carts to help residents that use the store have more mobility when shopping. Complaints from customers using larger bulky carts prompted the store to offer smaller carts to ease shopping excursions. The Old Town Safeway has been plagued by vandals taking carts at night while the store was closed. Teenagers from other parts of town have been seen in the parking lot after the store closes, using the carts as bumper cars and then traveling across town late at night with the carts. Graffiti on nearby houses was also being reported on some of the evenings that the bumper cart episodes were taking place. The problem had become so serious that customers would come to the store with no carts available to purchase groceries. The situation became so bad, that one store employee who owns a truck was assigned to drive

around to senior apartment buildings, where the carts were being left and retrieve them. IF YOU HAPPEN TO SEE ABANDONED CARTS THE SAFEWAY WILL GLADLY PICK THEM UP. A call to the Safeway or an address dropped off to store employees will prompt them to retrieve them. The carts cost about \$300 that are being replaced and are expensive for the store to order new ones. Store employees have already expressed concern about a drop in sales of 25-30% due to Whole Foods coming into Old Town. The store has cut back on employees and changed managers in the past year. Neighbors have complained of having long lines with only one sales clerk at the cash register in the evenings and on weekends. The store manager is working to correct this as at least two cashiers should be available at all times. He has said to customers that a second person is always there, but sometimes checking inventory in the back when trucks come in. A number of residents have reported feeling unsafe when only one cashier is on duty, at the same time, homeless people are panhandling residents in a confrontational manner, as the customer tries to make it through the front door. The lone cashier left there at night-time cannot not go see about the complaint or call police because they cannot leave their register. If you experience this please let the manager know, even if you have to come back the next day. By the way, for those that cherish organic foods the Safeway now has an organic food label and section and folks that use it say it is pretty good. **Teresa Miller**

*Editors Note: Old Town Safeway is under new management and a number of improvements have been made.*

### **FREEDMAN'S CEMETARY DEDICATION**

The City of Alexandria is just completing the purchase of the final property comprising Alexandria's Freedmen's Cemetery. As the first step in the creation of the Alexandria Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial Park, the Mayor and City Council are hosting the re-dedication on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May between 6-8 pm. After being forgotten and damaged since 1869, the cemetery and the some 1800 African Americans buried there will be commemorated by a ceremony and illumination--one luminary will be lit for each person. Each luminary bag has been decorated by someone to honor a specific individual. The City archaeologists will begin locating graves in mid-May so that the park will be designed to protect all those buried there. The park should be completed in 2010.

The event will take place on the 700 block of Church Street between South Washington and South Columbus streets. In order to provide a place for the ceremony, vehicular traffic will not be able to turn from South Washington Street into the 700 block of Church Street. Cars will also not be able to access South Washington from Church Street. However, Green and Jefferson streets will remain open to South Washington Street. Parking will not be allowed on the 700 block of Church Street starting at 3 p.m. through the duration of the event approximately 9 p.m.

The City is providing a parking shuttle service which will operate between St. Mary's School lot and the event. This arrangement should help reduce the impact of people parking in the surrounding neighborhood, but may cause increased traffic at that intersection before 6 p.m. and around 8 p.m.

There will be musical instruments, African drumming and singing by the City Choir during the event between approximately 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

## **UNDERGROUNDING OVERHEAD WIRES**

As you are well aware the City is under-grounding the overhead electrical wires on a number of streets in Old Town. The sequence of construction received from the contractor is: First he is going to install the nine manholes. Then he is going to start installing the conduit along S. Lee Street at Prince and move toward Wolfe. Then he will move to Duke, starting just west of Fairfax and heading east to S. Union. Then he will finish up on Wolfe Street, starting at Fairfax and moving to Union, including some work on Potomac Court. This is based on one crew working. If the contractor is able to obtain an additional crew, some of the work may occur simultaneously and the sequence may change slightly. In addition, there have been a number of inquires regarding the historic bricks underneath the asphalted streets. Why can the bricks be saved and put back when the under-grounding holes are patched up. Emily Baker, the City's Engineer has stated the following:

The patches that are currently being placed on the utility trenches are temporary, and are used to quickly close up the trenches to minimize the impacts to traffic and parking as well as allowing them to be reopened as necessary while the project is active. Once the project is complete, the contractor will replace these temporary patches with permanent ones that meet all city requirements and standards. It is the unfortunate nature of a project like this that there will be temporary inconveniences such as these temporary patches. We will make every effort to keep them as smooth as possible without adding delay or expense to the project. As you know, this project is an important priority for Old Town.

When old brick base material is encountered under roadways during excavation, it is not salvaged for reuse. These bricks, when encountered, are very deteriorated and in poor condition. They are not appropriate or safe to be reused under a roadway surface. T&ES has coordinated this project with the city archaeologists. They are aware of the work we are doing. Our contractors are required to notify the archaeologists at any time that any artifact or potential artifact is encountered. They then come out and inspect the excavation and complete their investigation before we proceed. Our inspectors make sure this happens; we have had a good relationship with Archaeology and OHA on these types of projects. An example is on the recently completed Tanyard Ditch project at Pitt and Gibbon Streets. We encountered a historic cistern; Archaeology was notified and they investigated and documented it. In addition, they documented the old brick sewer for historical records. These streets, as well as most in Alexandria, have been excavated for the placement of underground utilities for the past 100 years. There are very little previously undisturbed materials that we encounter. The brick base material has not been salvaged in the past; there is not a complete surface of brick beneath the asphalt roadway. However, when we disturb granite curbing, that material is salvaged and reused. I hope this helps to explain what we are doing out there. I know there is concern in the community for the preservation of the historic character in Old Town. We are trying to be sensitive to that while installing this contemporary infrastructure. **Emily Baker, City Engineer**

## **WATERFRONT COMMITTEE**

The April meeting of the Alexandria Waterfront Committee focused on management of boat traffic on the river, with presentations by the US Coast Guard, DC Fire/EMS Department, Alexandria Fire Department, and DC Harbor Police. We also received an update on remediation of discharge into Oronoco Bay. The City will be relining the storm sewer pipe

east of Lee to Union St. in the next few weeks. The step after that will be to dredge contaminated sites. The project should be completed in 12-18 months. **Susan Pettey, Chair**

### **WHERE WE HAVE BEEN**

Contributed to the Appeal of the BAR's egregious handling of the 900 North Washington Street Development decision. Council unanimously voted to uphold the appeal. In addition the Mayor stated he will write a letter to the BAR expressing his displeasure with the BAR's handling of the process. Also appeared before the Traffic and Parking Board regarding the changing of hours on the parking signs on the 400 block of Princess,. The Board voted 6-0 in favor of keeping the signs the way they presently are, as this could cascade throughout Old Town. The Council voted to approve valet parking on the 1500 block of King for the new Kempton Hotel. Our remarks concerning the domino effect of this all the way down King Street (17 blocks) fell on deaf ears. The Waterfront Committee has continued to refine its ideas regarding the redevelopment of the waterfront. The Collaborative Committee working our response to National Harbor is moving along quite well. The Deputy City Manager will give the OTCA Membership a complete update at our June 13th Meeting.

*Townsend A. "Van" Van Fleet*  
*President*

**THE NEXT OTCA MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS ON 13<sup>th</sup> OF JUNE**