

The Old Town Crier

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

Announcing the June Program and Notice of the Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, June 13, 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) **NATIONAL HARBOR UPDATE: MARK JINKS**
- (3) **ELECTION OF 2007-2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ELECTION OF 2007-2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee submitted the following slate of nominees for election to terms beginning at the June 2007 Membership Meeting. No other nominees were submitted to the Corresponding Secretary in accordance with the newly approved OTCA By Laws:

OFFICER NOMINEES

		TERM
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

PANHANDLERS IN OLD TOWN

If you are approached by a panhandler, you should call the Police Department's non-emergency number (838-4444). When you witness violations of panhandling (and any other non-emergency criminal offenses) taking place ask the Police Department to send an officer to deal with the offender. You will need to give a location and a description of the person as best you can. You can tell the dispatcher that you do not want to be seen by the police if that is your desire. Of course, if you want to talk to the police about the person's behavior - tell the dispatcher that you wish to speak with an officer.

An appropriate response to a panhandler is to firmly deny their request and then move on. It is okay to do that. The best thing you can do is to not act afraid and again firmly tell them "no." At that point do not stay in their presence even if they continue to talk to you. Walk away. If you have a cell phone - make the call to the police as I indicated above.

Keep in mind that if you choose not to see the officer or are not willing to become involved in prosecution of the offender, he/she will likely NOT be cited for the offense. Because the crime of Panhandling is a misdemeanor offense, it must occur in the officer's presence in order for a citation to be issued. Most panhandlers are aware of this and will not engage in illegal conduct in the presence of an officer. Remember that the standard for a panhandler being aggressive will be different for different people, and the officer must view the offender's conduct from the point of view of that fictional "reasonable" person.

The Ordinance for panhandling in the City appears below. Please take a moment to read it so that you are familiar with it and know how to react when approached.

Sec. 13-1-41 Panhandling.

- (a) Definitions. The following words and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the following meanings:
 - (1) Aggressive manner means:
 - (i) approaching, speaking to or following a person in a manner that would cause a reasonable person to fear imminent physical injury, Or the imminent commission of a criminal act upon the person or upon property in the person's immediate possession;
 - (ii) touching another person without that person's consent;
 - (iii) intentionally blocking or interfering by any means with the free passage of a person; or
 - (iv) engaging in any conduct with the intention of intimidating another person into giving money or goods to any person.
 - (2) Panhandle or panhandling means doing any of the following acts:
 - (i) begging, soliciting or asking for any item of value, monetary or otherwise;
 - (ii) attempting to sell or obtain compensation for an item or service for or in an amount that is at least twice its value, or an item or service that is already offered or available at no charge

- to the general public; or
- (iii) attempting to sell or obtain compensation for an item or service under circumstances that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that the payment is in substance a donation.
- (3) Public place means any street, sidewalk, alley, park, bridge, parking lot or other public property within the city, excluding any building or other structure, that is open to the general public;
 - (4) Travel lane means the portion of a public street over which motor vehicles travel.
- (b) Prohibited acts. It shall be unlawful for any person while in the city:
 - (1) to panhandle in an aggressive manner in or on any public place;
 - (2) to panhandle in an aggressive manner in any public transportation vehicle, including busses and trains;
 - (3) to panhandle in an aggressive manner within any train, Metro or other mass transit station or in or on any sidewalk, roadway or parking lot serving any such station and under the control of the owner or operator of such station;
 - (4) to panhandle within 15 feet of any automatic teller machine; and
 - (5) to panhandle or, as a result of panhandling, to receive money or any other item of value, while standing or otherwise present in a travel lane, from any operator or occupant of a motor vehicle located in a travel lane.
 - (c) Any person convicted of violating this section shall be guilty of a class 3 misdemeanor. (Ord. No. 3716, 4/16/94, Sec. 1)

SAFEMART REPORT

Lt. James Bartlett, OTCA's Police Liaison, reports that one of our civic association members approached him before the last meeting to talk about an article in OTCA's May Crier regarding the Safeway Market. In it, the author asserts that vandals are taking shopping carts from the Safeway at night and leaving them scattered throughout Old Town. The article also stated that graffiti is being reported on nearby houses and that there are aggressive panhandlers by the door of the store.

Officer Bartlett investigated these allegations and found that the Safeway has made no reports of shopping carts being stolen to the Alexandria Police Department. Also, only four reports of graffiti in Old Town have been filed this year, none anywhere near the 500 block of South Royal Street. In addition there have been no complaints of panhandlers down there. Officer Bartlett also spoke to the manager at the Safeway a short time ago. She told him that, although she has only been there a short time, she hadn't seen any of these things happening. She did say that if carts are seen about Old Town that anyone can call the store at 703-836-0380 and she will send someone to retrieve them.

WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE TASK FORCE

Our representative on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Task Force, Yvonne Weight reports that at the last meeting of the Task Force the following main points were discussed:

1. Traffic pattern changes, which of course is almost a weekly challenge. More of that will occur around the Telegraph road area as that overpass and access routes will change. Best thing: stay alert or stay away!
2. There will be a dedication of the urban deck on June 12, at 1:00 pm. (Invites are due out, but because of the smallness of the space, no other announcements will be made..
3. The City Manager will shortly be appointing representatives from a variety of boards, commissions, etc. to oversee the development of the Freedman's' Cemetery memorial site.
4. Parks and Recreation announced that the National Park Service has announced later this month it will announce its decision on Jones Point Park. In technical parlance they are announcing their Record of Decision on the Final Environmental Assessment. It appeared from what the Mayor said this is not an occasion for another round of public hearings, so what else will happen from here on out is undetermined.
6. Dr. Bowlby, the city's noise "expert" is due to be here on June 25, at Lyles Crouch regarding bridge noise. It is confusing that he is coming at this point in time, when construction noise is present together with highway noise, and before the sound wall on the north has been put into place, but we assume it will still be a good time to get questions answered. Also it is high time that we get further assurances that the sound wall will indeed happen.

OTCA'S ANNUAL MEETING ABOARD THE CHERRY BLOSSOM

Old Town Civics' Annual Membership Meeting aboard the Cherry Blossom will take place on the 16th of September. Invites will go out in July. For all you Redskin Fans, the Redskins will play on Monday night that weekend so there is no conflict! Let's break last year's record and fill the boat.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

Linda Couture's Waterfront Committee conducted two riverfront walks, both north and south of the Torpedo Factory. A great deal was learned about the current condition of the waterfront that will be put to good use in developing OTCA's Waterfront Plan. These two walks, our extensive survey and other studies regarding parking, traffic, archeology and the legal status of several waterfront properties will all be melded into what we the citizens think the waterfront should look like. OTCA wrote to the Mayor and Council a letter regarded the boarded up building at 802 North Washington Street. This 1890 building has been boarded up since 2000 and the city states that it is in fact in compliance with the code enforcement standards. OTCA has asserted that the owner of this building should clean up this historic building as by not doing so he is demolishing the building by neglect. The Board is fearful that the City will approve the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system on Route 1 from Crystal City over the Monroe Bridge terminating at the

Braddock Road Metro Station. The resulting traffic impact in Old Town could be disastrous when two center lanes on Route 1 are dedicated to BRT, especially in light of the fact that a minimum of an additional 20,000 cars are expected on Route 1 when Potomac Yard (Arlington and Alexandria) is completed. Outdoor dining on King Street has also been a continuing topic of discussion. Most of the complaints center on the fact that no one seems to be enforcing the code. We have expressed this to the City Planners when they briefed us at our May Board Meeting. In conjunction with the Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF) we have asked the City to give us the authority to jointly interview and recommend new appointees to the Old and Historic Board of Architecture Review (BAR). Three members terms are up in June and OTCA and HAF would like to play a role in the new appointments. Several members of OTCA were instrumental insuring that the City's Historic Preservation Conference was a gigantic success. OTCA Board Members John Johansen, Doug Thurman and Boyd Walker all played key roles in putting the conference together. After a lengthy Board discussion regarding the failure of bicyclists to stop at the stop signs on Union Street and other North-South avenues, OTCA sent a note to our Police Liaison asking for his Departments assistance in bringing this problem under control. If not corrected immediately, this will definitely adversely effect the economic development of the city with the opening of National Harbor next April. Asked the Parks and Recreation Department and the City Manager why the west side of Windmill Hill Park has been converted from a passive park to an athletic field. Parks and Rec answered that with the loss of soccer fields in Jones Point Park they needed to schedule games in Windmill Hill Park. Of course, all of this was done without consulting the neighborhood or attaining approval of the Council to change the status of the park. Our representative on the Parks Commission, Judy Noritake, does not represent the best interests of our Old Town neighborhood otherwise this would have never happened without a thorough vetting before the citizens and Council.

Townsend A. "Van" Van Fleet
President

**THE NEXT OTCA MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2007.
LOOK FOR YOUR CHERRY BLOSSOM INVITATION.**