

The Old Town Crier

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

Announcing the January Program and Notice of the Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, January 9, 2008
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) INTRO OF LT. KAPETANIS OF THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**
- (2) THE MIRANT PLANT: IGNACIO PESSOA AND BILL SKRABACK**
- (3) THE WATERFRONT STANDARDS: LINDA COUTURE**

THE MIRANT PLANT

Ignacio Pessoa, the City Attorney, and Bill Skraback, the Chief of the Environmental Quality Division will give an update on the status of the Mirant Power Plant's attempt to obtain a permit to continue operations. As you are well aware, the adverse effects of this plant has been around for years. The outdated plant burns more than 10,000 railroad cars of coal per year and processes up to 1,000 railroad cars of trona per year releasing, among other harmful substances: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, mercury, acid gases and 2.5 invisible particulate matter. All of which are hazardous to our health and sometimes fatal.

THE WATERFRONT STANDARDS

To facilitate future redevelopment of the Alexandria waterfront area in a manner which is harmonious with the history of the waterfront and the character of Old Town, the Old Town Civic Association has developed the following standards to guide the City of Alexandria's planning and approval processes for future development along and near the waterfront. The waterfront area is defined as that area within the City of Alexandria lying to the east of Fairfax Street and running from the Mirant Plant on the north to the north side of Jones Point Park on the south. Each of the following standards is of equal importance; all of them must be strictly adhered to.

1 – It shall be permissible, as a matter of right, to construct or reconstruct any building up to a height of 35 feet above the existing grade level. In the case of a building with a pitched roof, height will be measured from the existing grade level to the midpoint of the roof line. Under no circumstance shall a new or reconstructed building exceed 35 feet in height.

2 - The City shall require the creative reuse of existing historic buildings in lieu of demolition and building new. An historic building is defined as a structure that is more

than 100 years old, as specified by the City Charter and Zoning Ordinance, or for which an organization that addresses issue of historic importance to the City of Alexandria, including the Old Town Civic Association, present evidence of its historical importance to Alexandria or of its significant architectural merit.

3 – New structures along the waterfront shall, under no circumstance, be closer than 75 feet to the water’s edge. Where practicable, new buildings will be set back at least 100 feet from the water’s edge. The water’s edge is defined as where the mean high tide touches the shore at non-flood stage.

4 – Mixed uses on individual properties or within individual city blocks shall be encouraged. Mixed uses shall include residences, offices, retail, restaurants, and small European-style hotels.

5 – There shall be no net loss of parking spaces within the waterfront area; i.e., any existing parking space (on or off-street) that will be lost as the result of a property redevelopment must be replaced by a parking place within 400 feet of the existing parking space. The City should make an effort to provide for public access to existing private parking lots and garages during evenings and weekends that presently are largely vacant at those times.

6 – Building exteriors shall be similar to and compatible with structures of historic architectural merit now in existence east of Fairfax Street.

7 – The City shall develop uniform street-furniture standards which will provide a uniform historic look and feel in all public spaces east of Fairfax Street in keeping with the character of the Old and Historic District. Such standards shall apply to signage, lighting, colors, seating, type fonts, etc.

8 – The City shall develop uniform standards for public parks, walkways, and other public places east of Fairfax Street. Such standards shall be compatible with the uniform historic standards developed for street furniture. Where appropriate and feasible, landscaping and public art east of Fairfax Street must be consistent with Old Town’s historic nature.

9 – Properties purchased with the City’s Open Space funds cannot be resold to developers. Adaptive reuse of structures with historic or architectural merit on properties purchased with Open Space Funds shall be considered.

10 – Waterfront redevelopment shall provide for a continuous walkway or promenade along or as close as possible to the water’s edge so as to maximize pedestrian views of the Potomac River and vistas visible from the water’s edge, such as the Capitol building and the Washington Monument.

11 – The water’s edge, particularly in park areas, shall be beautified where feasible with vegetation and other improvements consistent with these standards and designed so as to

minimize the presence of unsightly debris and garbage. Where feasible, observation platforms shall be built or enhanced so as to increase views of the river and the Washington skyline. Where feasible, space will be made available along the water's edge for direct access to the river, including small, non-motorized boats.

OTCA ENDORSES THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACTION PLAN

The Board of Directors of the Old Town Civic Association endorsed the Guiding Principle, Goals and Recommendations of the Historic Preservation Conference Action Plan. Needless to say, the adoption of the plan underscores OTCA's commitment to historic preservation.

The plan, commissioned by the city and drafted by a broad coalition of individuals and organizations throughout the city, will strengthen historic preservation measures. If adopted by the city, it will bring the city's historic preservation practices up to par with those of communities that recognize the importance of protecting their historic assets.

The goals and recommendations of the plan appear below.

To learn how you can become a steward of Old Town's historic past, contact John Johansen of OTCA's Historic Preservation Committee at 202-841-4733 or johnjohansen@oldtowncivic.org

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONFERENCE – ACTION PLAN

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: To Enhance, Maintain and Promote Alexandria's Unique and Significant Historic Resources—Utilizing the Advances and Improvements in Preservation Tools and Practices—and To Support Sustainable Heritage Tourism for the Economic Benefit of the Community

- ✍ **GOAL # 1:** To create an historic preservation management plan, as directed in the Alexandria Master Plan of 1992, that will establish priorities for public officials and the community in making decisions regarding the future of preservation in Alexandria

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Alexandria hire additional preservation professionals to write the preservation plan and, on an ongoing basis, to implement and manage preservation policies espoused in the plan

- ✍ **GOAL # 2:** To promote history as a key factor in Alexandria's development and economic sustainability

RECOMMENDATION: City Council appointment representatives of the historic preservation community to active roles on commissions and work groups dealing with economic development and heritage tourism efforts

- ✍ **GOAL # 3:** To promote public awareness and support of historic preservation and heritage tourism in Alexandria

RECOMMENDATION: City Council charge the Office of Historic Alexandria with studying, developing and coordinating a preservation education program for the community

- ✍ GOAL # 4: To evaluate and improve the current regulatory process governing historic preservation

RECOMMENDATION: City Council establish a Regulatory Review Panel consisting of city staff and community representatives to evaluate the regulatory process and make recommendations

- ✍ GOAL # 5: To coordinate and enhance public/private partnerships and volunteer efforts on preservation initiatives including the maintenance of historic structures

RECOMMENDATION: City Council charge the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission with outlining the diverse community resources dealing with preservation issues and the opportunities for cooperative ventures and diversified funding initiatives

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

Russell George, one of our OTCA Board Members, has developed an Old Town Civic Association decal that can be affixed to our bumpers. Hopefully we will be able to provide it to you at one of our meetings in the immediate future.....Met with the City Manager along with Mike Hobbs, the Co-Chair of Federation of Civic Associations, to discuss the possibility of getting the Old and Historic Board of Architectural Review's (BAR) docket earlier than 3 work days before the hearings.....Met with the Collaborative for National Harbor, which will open on the 1st of April and pressed to have the following issues resolved: the elimination of motorcycles at the lower end of King Street; having a plan for the tour buses like Charleston, SC; and parking in newly created lots rather than in the residential areas.....Met with the Historic Associations and other civic associations regarding the Ceechi development at Hunting Terrace.....

For those of you who receive the Crier by mail, if you do not see "07/08" on your label, then you have not paid your dues for the 2007-2008 Membership year. A membership Renewal Form is enclosed.

**OLD TOWN CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
2007/2008 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM**

To Join or Renew: Please complete the information below. For membership, **the dues period begins each September 1 and ends each August 31.** Dues paid after July 1 are applied to the dues for the next period.

Contact Information:

Name: _____
(For a Household Membership, please list up to two persons)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip+4: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

In an effort to keep dues low, we are trying to produce as few paper copies of our monthly newsletter as possible. Can we send you our monthly newsletter by email? [] Yes [] No

Dues:

Single (\$12.00)	\$ _____
Household (\$20.00)	\$ _____
Additional Contribution	\$ _____
Total Dues Enclosed	\$ _____

Remittance:

Please make checks payable to "OTCA." Mail the Completed Form and your check to:

**The Old Town Civic Association
P. O. Box 1213
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1213**

**Townsend A. "Van" Van Fleet
President of the Old Town Civic Association**

THE NEXT OTCA MEETING IS ON THE 13th OF FEBRUARY