

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

OCTOBER 2016

A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

NVBCL working to help control Airbnb-type rentals

A GAIN I BRING to your attention the issue of unregulated, online “home sharing” rental platforms (think “Airbnb”) offering rooms for short-term leasing in dwellings in residentially zoned neighborhoods.

Neither the Commonwealth of Virginia nor the City of Virginia Beach has enacted laws to address these commercial enterprises, thereby presenting serious zoning, public safety, taxation, waste management, insurance, noise and parking issues. The civic league believes that this environment is unfair to residential property owners as well as conventional real estate brokers, hotels and traditional bed-and-breakfast establishments, all of which must adhere to local and state laws requiring proper land use and taxation. Most importantly, Airbnb and similar operations have no concern for the residential character of a neigh-



CATHY MILLER

This photo was taken by Sandbridge resident Cathy Miller in April 2015 as an illustration of what it can look like living close to a so-called party house.

NOMINEES WANTED FOR NVBCL BOARD

A search committee has been formed to seek nominations for the NVBCL Board of Directors, as outlined in the bylaws.

This process, which will review whether members wish to remain on the board, is intended to find new members to add their perspectives and ideas.

Since this process has not been done in some time, we are entering into it to find some new and younger members to be mentored by others who have served us so well over the years, in hopes that their experience and knowledge will be passed along to insure the board remains fully updated – not only on the new topics of

neighborhood in deference to commercial enterprise. Here is the NVBCL position on this subject:

“Given the current and total lack of an appropriate regulatory scheme established by either the Commonwealth of Virginia or the City of Virginia Beach to address the rental of private residences through the use of any virtual reservation system such as ‘Airbnb’ and/or others, the North Virginia Beach Civic League opposes the use of Airbnb to rent any such residence in the City of Virginia Beach unless and until the Commonwealth of Virginia and/or the City of Virginia Beach adopts and implements proper rules and regulations for such rentals consistent with the existing zoning of residential properties within its city limits.”

There is legislation pending before the General Assembly addressing online home rental platforms. While this bill is being studied, in its existing form an owner may rent his/her dwelling nightly with essentially no means for the City of Virginia Beach to identify that individual (Airbnb will not be required to disclose this information) in order to properly collect taxes and enforce zoning laws as well as building code requirements, all of which protect the character of residential neighborhoods and impose more stringent rules on commercial properties in the interest of public safety and taxation.

The City Council has recently appointed an ad hoc committee, of which I am the chairman, to study the issues and report its findings and recommendations to council before its Oct. 4 meeting. By the time you read this open letter, the committee likely will have completed its work. Nonetheless, it is important for you to understand the issues and advise council of your views.

I encourage you to visit the city’s website, www.vbgov.com, and click the “Online Home Rentals” icon on the right side of the home page. The information there will provide you with a more detailed accounting of the issues at stake, the concerns of our citizenry and city officials, the work of the ad hoc committee and a platform for you to state your position on the subject.

– Jack Drescher, president

the day but the history that has made our neighborhood such a great place to reside.

Serving on the committee with our thanks are past president John Pharr, current board members Jim Spruance and Sue Bowser, and members Tom Shadrick and Gerrie West.

– John Pharr



Upcoming civic league general meeting dates (Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., at A.R.E.)

Oct. 11

Jan. 17

April 18

Guest speaker for Oct. 11

Bruce Thompson, president and CEO of Gold Key/PHR, will speak about the status of and plans for the Cavalier properties.

Treasurer’s report

At the end of August, our league had 895 members, and our total assets were \$29,223.41.

Thank you to all members who have paid their 2016 dues, and we look forward to seeing everyone at the general membership meeting Tuesday, Oct. 11. (Remember, only those who have paid their dues may vote at the general membership meetings.)

NVBCL dues have allowed us to support landscaping, bus shelters, the welcome signs and several organizations. Contributions are deposited as they are received, and envelopes are included with this newsletter to submit your \$15.

– Bonner Styles



Important phone numbers

Nonemergency police, 385-5000, option 3

2nd Precinct, 385-2700

Neighborhood Preservation, 385-5750

online

Virginia Beach has launched a new property search tool, available as a mobile app, called VB Property, for Apple and Android devices and online at vbgov.com/property-search.

The app and site allow searching an address in Virginia Beach to see data about the parcel, including its assessed value, any improvements made, sales history and nearby city services. Most properties include a street-view photo and aerial images. Queries also can be run by neighborhood, ZIP code or square footage parameters.

— Guy Tower

HOSPITALITY

Looking for something fun to do during the fall?

Virginia Beach Garden Club Fall Festival, Convention Center, Oct. 5

“Reinvention and Discovery of Artistic Talent,” with students at Beach Gallery, through Oct. 8

27th Annual Train Show, Convention Center, Oct. 8-9

India Fest, Convention Center, Oct. 12: Bollywood dances, yoga, music, Indian cuisine

Treasures of the Earth Gem Mineral & Jewelry Show, Convention Center, Oct. 14-16

Old Coast Guard Station & Museum Oyster & Pig Fest, 24th Street at Atlantic Avenue, Oct. 16

Virginia Beach Craft Beer Festival, 31st Street Park, Oct. 22-23

Dolphin-watching cruises through Oct. 31, from Rudee Inlet

Dave Mason concert, Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m. Nov. 19

2nd Annual Coastal Virginia Auto Show, Convention Center, Nov. 19-20

For more details, go online to www.visitvirginia-beach.com

— Kimberly Gould

BEAUTIFICATION

MORE MEDIAN PROGRESS

Utilities cooperating with cleanup, screening

Over the past few months the NVBCL Beautification Committee has made contact with each of the public utilities’ representatives in the area to seek their assistance or cooperation in cleaning up and/or screening various utility structures in the Atlantic Avenue median.

So far, Dominion Virginia Power and Verizon have repainted their large connection boxes in the 7800 and 6700 blocks, respectively. In addition, Dominion Power has indicated it will remove the damaged poles in the 6100, 7700 and 8100 blocks, and Virginia Natural Gas will remove the abandoned riser in the 4900 block — all by sometime in October.

Meanwhile, the city Landscape Management Division has identified 14 utility boxes/structures from 45th to 84th streets in the median to be screened with landscape foliage, probably a variety of the viburnum shrub, such as the example at right.

The NVBCL Board of Directors approved an expenditure of \$3,000 on Sept. 13 to the city to cover the cost of contracting for an estimated 80 plants to be installed for that purpose this winter.

The city also will remove some extraneous rail and post fencing.

This should complete the second phase (of three) of our planned long-term median beautification renovation.

— Jim Spruance



Viburnum is a likely choice of shrub for screening around some utility companies’ structures along the Atlantic median.

GETTING THINGS DONE



GOING, GOING ...

VNG’s abandoned riser in the 4900 block, and one of Dominion Power’s damaged poles, 8100 block



Dominion Power has had two transformers between 78th and 79th streets repainted

(one pictured here, before and after), and both Dominion and Verizon have had several large connection boxes repainted in the median.



DON NADEN PHOTOS / NVBCL

BEACHES

HERMINE LEFT US PLENTY OF SAND

Hurricane Hermine, a tropical storm by the time it hit Virginia Beach on Sept. 3, dumped a large amount of sand on many of our crosswalks.

We are working with the

city’s Beach Operations, but all eight city beaches were affected, so it might be a while until they are able to clear our crosswalks.

Having said that, nothing prevents members from grabbing a broom or shovel and taking care of it themselves!

— Ron Pearson



RON PEARSON / NVBCL

62nd Street on Sept. 14

STREETS, UTILITIES, PUBLIC SAFETY



NEW PUMP STATION AT 48TH ST. WILL LOOK LIKE 61ST ST.

The NVBCL received a presentation on the planned 48th Street pump station at our July general membership meeting.

Since then the same league

design committee that fostered the design of the 61st Street pump station reviewed in detail the proposed 48th Street design.

After careful analysis and review, we requested that the city simply match the architecture and building materials of the 61st Street pump station. The city has agreed and developed renderings of what the station would look like.

In addition to the image shown here, you also can find the renderings on the NVBCL website, www.nvbcl.org, under Zoning & Streets.

— Billy Almond

ZONING REVIEW COMMITTEE

N.E. OVERLAY: HOW'S IT GOING?

The good news is the North End Overlay ordinance is having the desired effect.

As everyone knows, the vast majority of lots in the North End are grandfathered as duplex lots, which simply means you may build two attached houses on one lot regardless of the lot size. The North End Overlay was designed to still allow two residential structures but allow them to be detached rather than attached.

To qualify for building two detached dwellings, you must abide by the terms of the overlay, which has several design requirements and minimum spacing between the two structures. The overlay concept will allow for more architectural variations, additional light and space, and help keep developers and builders from constructing large, boxy duplexes that simply maximize square footage.

The civic league's Zoning Review Committee has had several new homes proposed under the overlay guidelines, and all designs are having the desired effect.

Thanks to everyone within the civic league who helped bring this about through both work and support.

— Dave Jester

Variances, nonconforming uses, planning initiatives

In order to better serve our neighborhood and to establish consistency in our review process, the NVBCL Zoning Review Committee meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Thursday of the month at the A.R.E. Visitor's Center, 67th Street and Atlantic Avenue.

Notifications of all variances for development come directly from the City of Virginia Beach's Planning Department, not the NVBCL. The ZRC responses to the city are strictly opinions on what the committee feels is in the best interest of the overall North End community. The ZRC has no authority to deny or approve any variance request.

We cordially invite all North End residents to attend with their current or future applications for variances, nonconforming uses and encroachments for preliminary or final review.

If you are considering buying property at the North End, please give us a call so we can advise you about your property in advance of the purchase. Contact Billy Almond at 235-0731 or billy@wplsite.com for additional information.

— Billy Almond

RESORT AREA UPDATE

Brad Van Dommelen: Convention-Visitors Bureau new director

Resort leaders are excited about the arrival of Brad Van Dommelen, the new director of the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). He takes over after the March 23 death of longtime director Jim Ricketts.

Van Dommelen (*pictured*) is from Traverse City, Mich., where he turned a seasonal summer resort into a fully active, year-around destination.

He is working with new City Manager Dave Hansen to advance resort initiatives.



The CVB is interested in advancing the headquarters hotel proposal and a possible fieldhouse to facilitate our highly successful sports marketing program, all within walking distance of the Convention Center.

You can read more about Van Dommelen online at www.vbgov.com/news/pages/selected.aspx?release=2862.

Resort projects

Dome site

On hold, as of press time, after developer The Peterson Cos. missed a June 30 deadline and hasn't announced whether it plans to continue the project. The Peterson Cos. is the Fairfax-based firm that built a mixed-use waterfront facility at National Harbor on the Potomac River in the Washington, D.C., area.

Arena

The proposed 19th Street arena took a step closer to fruition July 12 when the City Council signed off on a preliminary agreement between developer U.S. Management and a Chicago investment bank to build the \$210 million facility.

To learn more about the Arena project, go online to www.esgco.com/virginia-beach-arena or the city website www.yesvirginiabeach.com/resources/special-projects/Pages/Arena-Proposal.aspx.

The Cavalier

The Cavalier Hotel redevelopment is well under construction and renovation. Several recent initiatives involving the realignment of Atlantic Avenue are in the works. Also, the developer working in concert with the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau is entertaining the concept of a conference center hotel on the southern portion of the Oceanfront site in the future.

For basic information on the Cavalier project, go online to www.cavalierhotel.com.

ViBe District

The Resort Advisory Commission and the Strategic Growth Area office continue to support the creative efforts of the property owners and tenants within the ViBe Creative District. Basic information about the district can be found at www.thevibedistrict.com

Resort Area Master Plan and Form-Based Codes

The committee formed in late 2015 to study the effects of the Oceanfront Resort District (ORD) Form Based Code (FBC) on hospitality development in the resort continues its work. This group consists of representatives of the Virginia Beach Hotel Association, the Resort Advisory Commission, Resort Beach Civic League, resort architects and land-use attorneys as well as SGA and planning staff. Several revisions to the FBC are in the works for 2016 that will involve public hearings, Planning Commission and City Council actions.

Additionally, this city website offers information on these and other projects listed below: www.vbgov.com/government/departments/sga/projects:

- The Aquarium and Owl Creek District Plan
- Convention Center Headquarters Hotel
- Resort Area Master Plan and Form-Based Codes
- Rudee Loop (Marina District) and Rudee Promenade

— Billy Almond

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Have you paid your \$15 dues for 2016?

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