

# North Virginia Beach Civic League News

JANUARY 2017

## A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

### The Atlantic Ave. realignment – from NVBCL's perspective

**I** WRITE TO YOU on behalf of the NVBCL Board of Directors to explain our collective opinion regarding the possible closure of Atlantic Avenue at its intersection with Pacific Avenue between 40th and 42nd streets. The city is poised to invest in this and surrounding infrastructure changes, all on public land, which will undoubtedly improve the flow of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic through this area. In the board's view, this plan will best serve the North End.

First, a brief history of how the Old Cavalier Hotel has come to be refurbished. In 2013 a Buckingham County Circuit Court judge ordered that all Cavalier properties be sold after dismantling long-standing family ownership. The entire parcel on both sides of Pacific Avenue – consisting of the Old Cavalier Hotel, the "New" Cavalier Hotel and the Cavalier Beach & Cabana Club – was at that time zoned to allow by right the building of some 3,200 units on the properties. Yes, you are reading that number correctly. The thought of high-rise condominiums, apartments and potential time-share projects, with attendant traffic and other quality of life problems, seriously concerned the civic league board. We felt it was incumbent upon the city to take important steps to save the Old Cavalier and minimize the impact of multi-unit development elsewhere on these properties. So, with unanimous approval (there was a single abstention due to a conflict of interest) of the board, then NVBCL President Brian Murden wrote a letter to the mayor that reads in pertinent part as follows:

*I write to you on behalf of the North Virginia Beach Civic League, whose Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed aggressive efforts by or on behalf of the City of Virginia Beach to preserve this local landmark. We recognize that unfortunately the "Old Cavalier" has never been officially designated a historic property; nonetheless, the Cavalier on the Hill has not only played a significant role in the rich history of Virginia Beach, but has become what we feel is the predominant landmark on the Oceanfront.*

*We are advised that the current owners of the Cavalier properties through a Buckingham County Circuit Court decision have sought what appear to be nationwide proposals to purchase all of the Cavalier holdings, including the Cavalier on the Hill. Certainly, we*

*recognize that any landowner is entitled to develop his or her property in accordance with applicable zoning guidelines as he or she deems appropriate; however, we would hope and indeed encourage development which would preserve the integrity of the Cavalier on the Hill for future generations to come.*

*We also understand that the City of Virginia Beach has formally stated its commitment to hopefully create some sort of partnership with any future developer to maintain the integrity of the original hotel and yet take appropriate steps to partner with new owners to hopefully create a business endeavor which will be financially beneficial to the developer and at the same time preserve this wonderful treasure. We applaud that effort and further urge City Council to engage in whatever negotiations are appropriate to create desirable and workable strategies to partner with the eventual purchaser with a view toward obtaining the best possible development for all concerned. The North Virginia Beach Civic League strongly encourages the use of historic tax credits, official designation through the National Registry of Historical Places or Virginia Landmarks, tax relief and any appropriate monetary concessions and inducements in which the city may lawfully participate to achieve the desired objective, the importance of which cannot in our judgment be overstated.*

Only one bidder, Bruce Thompson, submitted a proposal that would save the Old Cavalier Hotel and preserve its historical significance for our community. He with other investors, including Bart Frye, whose



company developed East Beach in Norfolk, eventually concluded that residences comprising single-family houses and townhouses with strict architectural, material and building standards were preferable to high-rise apartments, condominiums and/or time-share enterprises surrounding the grand old hotel. On numerous occasions thereafter NVBCL board members convened as a group and individually with representatives of Cavalier Associates regarding this development. Our discussions focused on the commercial and residential objectives of the developers, topics far too complex and detailed to include in this message. Then-president Pharr and I (as vice president) attended several meetings with other interested stakeholders, including representatives of the Princess Anne Country Club, Cavalier Shores Civic League officers and several other individuals representing the Bay Colony Civic League, the Linkhorn Park Civic League, the Oceans Condominium Association and the Oceans II Condominium Association.

In mid-2015 Cavalier Associates requested an opportunity to address the civic league board regarding the possible closure of Atlantic Avenue at its intersection with Pacific Avenue. Keep in mind that the Commonwealth of Virginia owns Atlantic and by law would have to agree to the closure with concurrence

Please see **Atlantic plan**, Page 3



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

Jan. 17

April 25

July 18

**Guest speaker for Jan. 17**

Captain *Michael P. Ronan*, commanding officer, 2nd Precinct, Virginia Beach police

**Treasurer's report**

As of Dec. 22, our league had 954 paid members – a record! – and our total assets were \$27,971.75.

Thank you to all members who have paid their 2016 dues, and we look forward to seeing everyone at the general membership meeting Tuesday, Jan. 17. (Remember, only those who have paid their dues may vote at the general meetings; 2016 dues will count for this meeting.)



**NVBCL dues** have allowed us to support landscaping, bus shelters, the neighborhood 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

## ZONING

The NVBCL Executive Board voted Dec. 13 to change one of our bylaws that required the civic league to notify property owners of proposed zoning changes.

The reason for this proposed, substantive rewording of the bylaw is that the notification of affected property owners by the NVBCL is virtually impossible to undertake. Obviously, the adjacent property owners might be affected, but who is affected in his or her opinion beyond those adjacent neighbors is subject to interpretation. Even the city doesn't have a notification requirement as restrictive as ours.

The city posts a notice in a newspaper as well as a sign on the property. Further, and perhaps most important, we are not a final decision maker but rather an interested party that ultimately expresses an opinion on behalf of the NVBCL membership to the city's Board of Zoning Appeals.

The exact wording, of both the original and proposed bylaw language, will be presented at the Tuesday, Jan. 17, general membership meeting – 7:30 p.m. at the A.R.E. Center.

– Billy Almond

### online

The city's Convention and Visitors Bureau just released the VICTUS study regarding Virginia Beach's position in sports marketing, which has produced the largest percentage of attendees and room nights in our resort.

Next steps in sports marketing are outlined in the study, including a recommendation for a field house near the Convention Center.

Find the presentation at [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B\\_ezDVjqVLXDWWZsYjBLTEdheW8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_ezDVjqVLXDWWZsYjBLTEdheW8/view?usp=sharing).

– Billy Almond

## BEAUTIFICATION

# MEDIAN GETS MORE LOVE

### Shrubs planted to help screen utility boxes, more trees on the way – and that's not all

Things are looking up in the Atlantic Avenue median.

Last month the city's landscape folks contracted with Winn Nursery to plant 79 "Spring Bouquet" viburnum plants. Each will grow to an approximate 4-foot diameter and height to serve as screening around most of the major utility boxes in the median. This month 11 more trees are to be planted to enhance or replace those planted last year. This effort was initiated by and funded with a \$3,000 donation from your civic league.

Also, the city has removed the superfluous rail-and-post fencing in the 6700 and 8300 blocks of the median, and Virginia Natural Gas has removed the abandoned riser in the 4900 block. Dominion Power has started replacing its damaged

poles, starting with the one in the 8100 block.

We have requested that Public Works and Public Utilities landscape and screen their pump stations in the 7800 and 8300 blocks.

The NVBCL Beautification Committee would like to start an initiative this year whereby residents "adopt" an adjacent Atlantic Avenue median landscape bed. We only ask that volunteers commit to weed an

existing bed twice a year.

As we expand to the third and final phase of our median beautification plan, new median beds will be planted with a priority to areas where specific residents have committed, in advance, to adopt. This initiative is in conjunction with our efforts to reduce labor costs for our city Landscape Division and its reduced budget funding.

– Jim Spruance



DON NADEN / NVBCL

Seventy-nine "Spring Bouquet" viburnums have been planted to help shield utility boxes in the Atlantic Avenue median. (This one is in the 8000 block.) They should grow to about a 4-foot height and width.

## GETTING THINGS DONE



Going, going ... GONE VNG's abandoned riser in the 4900 block has been removed, and one of Dominion Power's damaged poles, in the 8100 block, is in the process of being replaced; the new pole stood beside it late last month.



DON NADEN PHOTOS / NVBCL



The NVBCL has requested that the city landscape and screen pump stations in the 7800 and 8300 blocks of Atlantic (above, the 8300 block, in December).

## 3 NOMINEES UP FOR VOTE AS DIRECTORS

The NVBCL Nominating Committee has submitted the names of Anne Abraham, Jake Denton and Kate Michaels to serve as new directors on the league's board.

The membership will vote on these nominees at the upcoming general meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m. at the A.R.E. Center.

Committee members are Past President John Pharr, Jim Spruance, Sue Bowser, Tom Shadrick and Gerrie West.

– Jack Drescher

# ATLANTIC PLAN

From the front

of the city. Mr. Thompson and his staff met with the board Oct. 6, 2015, explaining in great detail the ideas involved in closing the street with the attendant ramifications on our neighborhood. Many questions were posed to Cavalier Associates and answered by its staff. Pharr's subsequent letter to Thompson summarizes the board's unanimous position (again with one abstention) and reads in part:

*On behalf of the North Virginia Beach Civic League, I very much appreciate your appearance before the Board of Directors on Tuesday, October 6. It was abundantly clear to everyone present that you have expended and will continue to invest a tremendous number of hours and capital in order to improve and preserve The Cavalier Hotel. Your presentation was quite informative regarding the current status and future objectives of the overall project. We applaud your efforts.*

*You have asked that the Civic League consider an endorsement of a proposal by the developers of The Cavalier Hotel and adjacent properties to permanently close Atlantic Avenue from 40th Street to its current intersection with Pacific Avenue in front of The Cavalier Hotel. Following your remarks the Board engaged in a thorough discussion of the issue. Taking into consideration any number of variables involved in this decision with particular focus on the existing City of Virginia Beach traffic control studies, a vote was taken by the Board. The only potential concern is the City's handling of left turn southbound Pacific/Atlantic Avenue traffic onto 40th street. It is unknown at this particular point in time whether a traffic light will be installed at this intersection. The question is how southbound, left turn traffic onto 40th Street will be handled. It is our understanding that you will discuss this issue with the City.*

*The Board has determined that your proposed closure of Atlantic Avenue as presented is meritorious and desirable. We particularly like the idea that at least a portion of this area will be designated as a public park. Accordingly, the Board unanimously endorses your proposal subject only to possible future consideration depending upon the results of the City's investigation into the traffic issue articulated above.*

*Again, we appreciate your time and effort in explaining the overall project to us.*

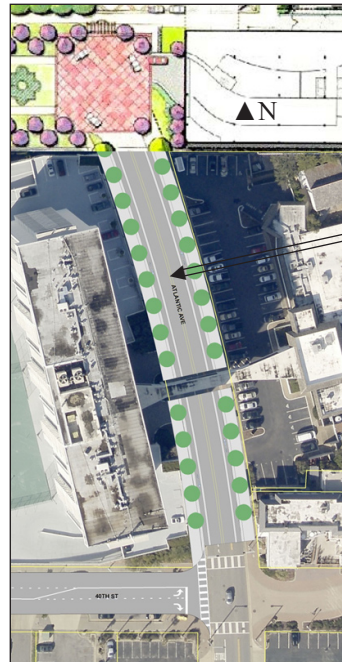


◀ The city's plan would rework Pacific Avenue southbound to allow a left turn lane onto 40th Street, next to two southbound lanes, and a northbound left turn lane into Galilee Episcopal Church while preserving two northbound lanes.

On Dec. 13, 2016, the board met with the Virginia Beach deputy city manager, the city traffic engineer and several of his staff as well as representatives of Cavalier Associates, including Frye. The proposal to close Atlantic at its intersection with Pacific in front of the Old Cavalier was again discussed, taking into consideration cost, additional vehicular traffic in and out of the proposed two new hotels on the Oceanfront (eventually totaling some 320 rooms), the Old Cavalier (80 rooms) and the residential neighborhood constructed around it (80 projected houses/townhouses). Bicycle and pedestrian traffic through the area also was carefully considered.

In the end analysis, the ultimate question was simply this: Which street routing will safely and efficiently serve pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles through this area, which by definition best serves North End residents? The city professionals without question supported the proposal depicted here. By a vote of 13-3 (with an abstention due to a conflict of interest), the board agreed.

Here's why. Southbound Pacific gains a designated left turn lane at 40th. Northbound Pacific gains a designated left turn lane into Galilee Episcopal Church plus a designated left turn lane onto Cavalier Drive (at 42nd). The existing left turn lane from southbound Pacific onto what is now Atlantic would remain unchanged except that there would be no traffic light there. Atlantic would be closed here, the existing park would be expanded somewhat and Cavalier Associates would construct at its expense an area adjacent to what was once a street to handle valet parking for the hotels accompanied by expanded "green areas" of plantings, trees and the like. Two traffic lights for both vehicular and pedestrian/bicycle traffic would be placed at 40th/Pacific as well



RENDERINGS COURTESY CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

▲ 40th Street, after parking is removed, becomes three lanes, allowing right and left turn lanes at each end.

as 42nd/Cavalier and Atlantic. Additional lanes would be added to 40th Street to accommodate left- and right-turning vehicles at the intersection with Pacific. There would be a loss of several parking spaces on 40th – but the net effect of these changes would leave two unimpeded northbound and two unimpeded southbound through lanes of motor vehicular travel on Pacific between 40th and 42nd/Cavalier. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic would be routed along the east side of Pacific and through part of the closed portion of Atlantic to where Atlantic would terminate in front of the Oceans and Oceans II Condominiums. Such traffic would continue down Atlantic to the 40th Street intersection.

Yes, there is a cost of some \$2 million to \$2.5 million to



▲ Atlantic still intersects with Pacific in the initial Cavalier plan, but the new proposal terminates it with a cul-de-sac and park at the new hotels' oceanside property.

modify the existing streets and sidewalks and add landscaping improvements, all of which are on public property. The city estimates from confidential documents provided by the developer that these costs would be recovered in tax revenue generated from the Cavalier projects within one to two years. Ideally, Cavalier Associates would pay for these costs separately from tax revenues; however, it has not agreed to do so. The city is willing to invest in these infrastructure changes as they without question would improve the flow of pedestrian/vehicular traffic through this area. In the NVBCL Board's view, this plan would best serve the North End and is no different than any other street improvement project undertaken by Virginia Beach.

There you have it. We do not expect that all North End residents will agree with our decision, but we hope everyone will understand our motivation to achieve the best possible result for our neighborhood, given the impact of the Cavalier development. Again, I remind you that the Old Cavalier Hotel has been saved, and we "North Enders" have avoided the potentially catastrophic impact of 3,200 units being built along our southern border.

– Jack Drescher, NVBCL president

# North Virginia Beach Civic League News

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**\$15 dues for 2017 are now due.**

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