

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

OCTOBER 2022

A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

RESPECT FOR DUNES IS VITAL FOR NORTH END

Your civic league has strength in numbers, and we can use this power to help our North End community, including standing firm on a policy against encroaching into the dunes. Also, we will vote on a new vice president and continue watching the STR issue.

By Gary Sharpe
NVBCL president



THANK YOU for taking the time to read this newsletter and staying connected with the NVBCL. Our strength is in our membership and your continued support. With nearly 1,000 members, we can help shape the narrative of what happens in our community and continue to ensure we help protect the general interest of all North End residents.

As a beach-loving community and neighborhood, we are all familiar with the importance of keeping our beaches pristine, and this includes the health and integrity of our dune system. Beyond their natural beauty, the dunes play a vital role in protecting our community from storm surge.

Yet recently we have seen an uptick in encroachment into the dunes by residents in our community and an altering of the natural landscape and vegetation. If this practice becomes routine, it would be devastating to our local ecology.

During our last board meeting, your directors decided to adopt a formal position on the matter: "The NVBCL will not support or approve any encroachment that extends past the individual property lines into the dunes, easements, right of way, or similar areas."

We feel the need to preserve this beautiful natural treasure is paramount.

Turning to board matters, Kate Michaels recently resigned as vice president and a director. We all want to thank Kate for her years of commitment and service to the civic league and wish her well. After the board held a special election late last month, the vice president role will now be held by Skip Gibson. He now chairs our Beaches & Recreation and the newly formed Government Affairs committees. I look forward to having Skip voted in for the remainder of the term at our next general membership meeting Tuesday, Oct. 18.

INSIDE



Dunes defense
Skip Gibson's report on damage to our dunes.
Page 2

NVBCL's Fall Social
has been scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 26, at **Quemar**, the new Latin American-Mexican restaurant. **Details, Page 3**

I also want to remind everyone to please join the now-up-and-running North Virginia Beach Civic League Facebook group. This will be a great forum to interact with other members and find important information, updates, newsletters and to share pictures from our social events and community happenings. In addition to adding Facebook,

Please see **PRESIDENT**, Page 3

STREETS/UTILITIES/PUBLIC SAFETY

Too-fast flash Will they slow down if the speed sign says they're still going too fast?

By Martin Waranch
Streets/Utilities/Safety

The big news from the Streets Committee: the installation of a speed advisory sign in the east-bound lane of Shore Drive at the approach to Atlantic Avenue.

The city speed limit of 25 mph is often ignored, so the intent is to get drivers to slow before they reach the traffic signal and the turn at 83rd and Atlantic.

Time will tell.

This sign soon "will display live feeds up to 31 mph" once it is reprogrammed, "and then after 31 mph, it'll flash 'too fast,'" as

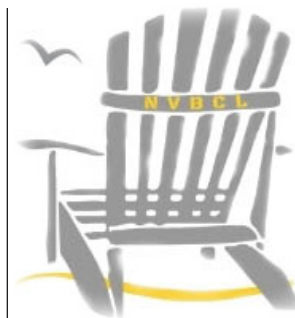
it does now, city traffic engineer Brian Proctor emailed Oct. 3.

With the end of the season, some of the traffic pressure is relieved, but Atlantic still is the entry/exit at the North End of the Oceanfront. Radar is often employed to help control speed, but traffic appears to run 40 mph and more most of the time. (I'll look into the math required to let everyone know how much faster you can reach 47th Street when speeding above the posted 35 mph. Certainly, Alexa will know!)

Please see **STREETS**, Page 3



DON NADEN | NVBCL



Upcoming civic league general meeting dates (Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., at A.R.E.)

Oct. 18, Jan. 17, April 18

Speaker for the Oct. 18 meeting

Terri Gorman from the Lynnhaven River NOW project will speak on the group's Pearl Homes and Pearl Neighborhoods projects and the extensive work the organization does to restore and protect Virginia Beach's waterways and natural resources.



Treasurer's report

Thank you to all members of the civic league who have paid their 2022 dues. Our membership stands at 939, and our assets are \$47,682.12.

This newsletter includes 2022 member-dues envelopes. Our annual dues are \$20, for the calendar year. You also can pay through PayPal on the NVBCL website, www.nvbcl.org. Please include your North End address, your primary resident address and your email address.

Also, for those who made donations to the civic league, thank you so very much. Our projects continue to improve and grow.

NVBCL dues have allowed us to support landscaping, bus shelters, the neighborhood welcome signs and several organizations.

— Bonner Styles



Public safety phone numbers

2nd Precinct Police, 757.385-2700

Nonemergency police, 757.385-5000, option 3

Fire/police emergency, 911

BEACHES & RECREATION

Dunes damage Let us count the ways (so many!) that people abuse our sandy oasis

By Skip Gibson
Beaches & Recreation

Over the past several months a number of residents have attempted to extend their yards past their property lines and into the sand dunes.

Whenever residents encroach into the dunes, they are creating a private, exclusive-use yard out of public property, which exists for everyone's enjoyment. Can you imagine what the dunes would look like, the impact to them and the outcry the city would receive, if every Oceanfront resident extended their yard into the dunes? It's hard to imagine how homeowners can defend the taking of city property in the dunes for private use.

Asked why they are extending their yards into the dunes, the reason residents most often give is that they are "improving" the dunes by clearing out undergrowth, cutting down trees and removing weeds. Residents are extending flower beds and gardens, planting ornamental trees and shallow-root plants.

In every case, the dunes are damaged. The naturally growing trees, sea oats and sea grass in the dunes have roots that stabilize the dune, permit the ebb and flow of sand moving along the dune line, and provide natural protection against erosion. There is no reasoning that can justify creating a private-use yard in the dunes.



SKIP GIBSON PHOTOS | NVBCL



This car was driven onto the beach walkway and then got stuck in the sand. The golf cart also drove up the walkway and was parked by the dune benches. The "62" post? Maybe a catamaran anchor or a private street identifier. The city removed it.

The North Virginia Beach Civic League will not support or approve any encroachment that extends past the individual property lines into the dunes, easement, right of way or similar areas. We support the city's position to prevent dune encroachment and for residents to return/restore the dunes to their natural conditions beginning at the property line.

It's amazing what some people do to our beach, dunes and walkways. At left are photos of incidents that have occurred over a single, one-month period this past August: A car drove onto the walkway and got stuck in the sand at the base of the dunes; a golf cart drove up the walkway and parked in the dunes by the benches at the top of the dune; a wooden post was set in the dunes for an unknown reason, possibly to secure a catamaran.

Seriously folks, we need to protect our dunes.

A PAT ON THE BACK

While many of us were enjoying the three-day July 4th weekend, the city's Beach Operations Division, led by Mitch St. Clair, was out in full force preparing, maintaining and cleaning the beaches for everyone's use. Here's one example of their efforts.

On Monday, the 4th, several hundred people gathered between 64th and 65th

See **CLEANUP**, facing page

Dunes 2 Nature nurtures our beach sand, and the city posts street numbers

There is some good news regarding the dunes.

The May storm that lingered off the coast brought the dunes a significant increase of sand. In some places, the primary coastal dune is 1 to 2 feet higher, and there are new sea oats and sea grass, which naturally grow in these areas.

The city also has been in the process of placing 4x4 wooden posts at the oceanside base of the dunes showing the street numbers. Each post has low-emission lighting on top to help identify the pathway from the beach to the street at night.

Fall and winter are great times at the Oceanfront. Let's continue to do all we can to protect the resources of our sand dunes.

— Skip Gibson



SKIP GIBSON | NVBCL



DON NADEN | NVBCL

The light atop the posts makes it easy to spot where they are, but in the dark one cannot make out the street number — at least, not on this post at 62nd Street, visible only with flash photography.

BEAUTIFICATION

Trash talk Let's all keep on top of it

By Jim Spruance
Beautification

Well of course you can pick up trash or take down signs in the Atlantic Avenue median yourself, and many do, but here is a handy primer for those who might feel intimidated or inconvenienced.

There is a reason they are called “yard signs” and not “roadway decorations”; they are permitted on private property and *not* on city or public property.

Asking those dedicated, if somewhat misguided, political volunteers not to place their candidates’ yard signs on public property is seldom well-received and often fruitless.

To avoid confrontations, city Zoning Enforcement prefers they be notified, and they will remove them. The zoning office (with sign responsibility) telephone number, (757) 385-8074, is sometimes answered during regular working hours, but I have found emailing them at zoning@vb.gov has gotten results by the next working day. Just be sure to specify the



JIM SPRUANCE PHOTOS | NVBCL

number and location of the offending signs.

There are two trash receptacles on duty next to the two sheltered HRT bus stops, 57th and 67th streets. HRT has shown itself



Bus stop trash can full? Scan the QR code to get HRT to come empty it. Stop # is on the sign.

to be very responsive to emptying those cans when overflowing: Connect to gohrt.com/clean by scanning the QR code on the bus stop shelter or call (757) 222-6100 and report the stop number listed on the bus stop sign. Those “Am I Clean?” signs are also good for reporting graffiti, vandalism or any other HRT-stop discrepancies.

So there you go – be part of the solution. Two new contacts for your cell phone, because who leaves home without one?

STREETS

From the front

The limited number of streets with curbs and gutters and the usual heavy parking on our streets preclude much in the way of city street cleaning. Thus, it falls to all of us to keep our neighborhood clean. Mentioned before, I get double duty from Charlie’s dooty bag. I am pleased to see many folks are picking up the trash.

A major problem remains large-item and/or vegetation pickup. The former requires you to call (757) 385-4650. The latter is supposed to be routinely picked up if in clear plastic bags or stacked in piles with pieces no longer than 4 feet. While the system to collect garbage and recycling is seamless, and large items are most often handled expeditiously, piles of landscape debris often seem to be ignored. I’ve been in contact with Waste Management, but it is the neglected stepchild.

Daytrip pressure for parking space has eased. However, we must *all* be cognizant of the fact that the unpaved ROW – the city right of way – along our streets is for public parking. You may not extend your landscaping to the pavement.

Have a great Fall! ■

CLEANUP

From Page 2

streets for a party on the beach. They set up tents, chairs, tables and many coolers. They were there most of the day and enjoyed a perfect beach day. However, when they left, they left a ton of trash on the beach, a true mess.

But Mitch and his work crews were already out there on the Fourth, assessing the beach and preparing everything needed to go to work on the 5th of July. The city work crews arrived very early in the morning and began cleaning this area with their equipment and manual labor. Within a few hours, the beach had been cleared of bottles, plates, plastic bags, unusable beach chairs and much more.

Once they finished, the trash had been removed, the beach was raked and graded, and was ready for others to use. The Beach Operations people then did what they do best – they continued down the beach to the next trashed area and cleaned it as well.

So while we were enjoying the holiday, Mitch and his division were working on the Fourth, going above and beyond to make our city better. Our thanks to Mitch and his team! ■

– Skip Gibson

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

NVBCL KEEPING AN EYE OUT FOR STR THREATS

By Jayna Eller and Skip Gibson
Government Affairs

Short Term Rentals are a continuing area of interest among many residents who do not want the character of the North End to change.

Under the existing city ordinance, no new STRs are allowed in our neighborhood. However, last year’s state legislative session saw multiple concerning bills introduced aimed at circumventing what we achieved at the local level. Ultimately, the bills failed, and nothing changed – but we believe the biggest potential challenges to our local STR legislation will come from the state level.

Thus we have had discussions with Debra Bryan, assistant to the city manager for legislative affairs, and Kristen Dahlman, state Department of Housing and Community Development’s director of legislative affairs. We will continue to stay in contact with them as the General Assembly convenes in 2023.

We also are buying a software program that will allow us to track bills introduced in the next session. If we see any STR bill submissions, we will be able to coordinate with our city and state representatives.

HOSPITALITY

FALL SOCIAL WILL BE OCT. 26 AT QUEMAR

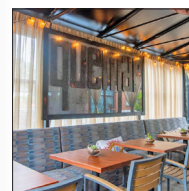
By Monica Stein
Hospitality

Join us at our NVBCL Fall Social!

From 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26, at Quemar Wood-fired Cocina, 1201 Laskin Road – the former Bella Monte space.

Come shake things up with neighbors and friends, enjoy happy-hour cocktails, appetizers, live music, stay for dinner if you like and help us welcome in the fall season.

want to go?



What
NVBCL Fall Social

When
Wednesday,
Oct. 26,
6 to 8 p.m.

Where Quemar Wood-Fired Cocina, 1201 Laskin Road, (the old Bella Monte space), Latin American-Mexican restaurant

Valet parking available

PRESIDENT

From the front

we are also working on freshening up our website to be more functional and user friendly with more regular updates.

We also remain focused on any potential changes to our local rules on short-term rentals. With the upcoming state legislative session just around the corner, we continue to keep an eye on all things STR-related, and our Government Affairs Committee is prepared to notify us of any legislation with potential impact to our neighborhood. (*Story, this page, at left*)

I am happy to announce our next meeting speaker will be Terri Gorman from the Lynnhaven River NOW project. She will speak about the group’s Pearl Homes and Pearl Neighborhoods projects and the extensive work the organization does to restore and protect our waterways and natural resources.

Although we will not hold our big party this fall, we have confirmed the NVBCL Fall Social for Oct. 26 at Quemar, the Latin American-Mexican restaurant in the former Bella Monte space on Laskin Road. Details are in Monica Stein’s Hospitality Committee report, at left on this page.

Can’t wait to see you all there. ■

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

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Find more information on our website, nvbcl.org.

FLOWER POWER

81st St. sows some support for Ukraine

Neighbors on 81st Street like to do a lot of things together, and when Linda Wade (center in the photo) had an idea, "Several of us agreed it'd be fun and an honor to pay tribute to Ukraine and line our street with sunflowers," Vicki Vaughan (at right) wrote in an email.



"Our vision didn't quite pan out (thanks to pesky squirrels, sandy soil, too much shade, mistaken identity to weeds, and a plethora of other excuses!), but it's been a lot of fun watching the surviving sunflowers grow at the beach! All participants received sunflower sunglasses and beautiful blooms."

Also in the photo above is Maridy Birkhead, next to Vicki; Cindy Kuhn, on Linda's left; and Cheryl Jordan.

— Don Naden



COURTESY 81ST STREET SUNFLOWER LADIES

ZONING ISSUES

City, ZRC set priorities for development rules

By Billy Almond
 Zoning Issues

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the NVBCL Zoning Review Committee is working on several initiatives with City Councilman Linwood Branch, Planning Director Bobby Tajan, Zoning Administrator Hannah Sabo and the city's Planning staff to revise regulations as they pertain to redevelopment.

ZRC members met in person with this committee June 9 regarding the following redevelopment topics. Those in **bold** are advancing immediately based on the NVBCL Executive Board actions at their meeting Sept. 13:

1. Remaining nonconforming parcel re-subdivisions into new nonconforming parcels.

2. Clarifications to the **R5RNE zoning ordinance regarding the "Two Detached Cottage" options, graphic examples and narrative revisions in the zoning ordinance.**

3. **"Two Detached Cottage" option allowed on 7,500-square-foot parcels or larger.**

4. **Revisions of the R5RNE zoning ordinance to allow garage apartments "by-right."**

5. **Establishment of the R5RNE Zoning/Civil inspector and contact.**

6. Public Works Real Estate participation and processes regarding public Right-of-Way (ROW) encroachments, including Oceanfront properties and associated dune systems, and blatant privatization of ROW property frontage with site construction that takes away public parking.

7. The City of Virginia Beach's Zoning Ordinance definition of impervious cover with respect to permeable pavement systems.

8. **Interior Oceanfront parcels with no direct attachment to a public ROW – Impervious cover hardship.**

9. **Property line vacation requirements for redevelopment.**

The Zoning Review Committee will continue to participate in the Planning Department discussions and will report the outcome to the NVBCL general membership as soon as possible.

The ZRC continues to review applicants' requests for variances at 6 p.m. the second Thursday of the month at the A.R.E. Visitor Center, 67th Street at Atlantic Avenue.

Construction at the North End is very active. Property owners are selling properties to developers who are tearing down older cottages and building duplexes or the detached-cottage schemes.

We ask that before you sell your property to a developer, to talk with the ZRC regarding your options for redevelopment.

We are seeing an increase in illegal, nonpermitted construction including driveway expansions, shed construction, decks, terraces, fences and other house additions. If you see construction on your street and do not see a visible city permit displayed on the property, please contact any ZRC member.

We remind our neighbors that developers have three options for North End properties: single-family house, duplex or two detached cottages on one parcel. The two detached-cottages option is an incentive-based design guideline, and a developer must comply with the design criteria in the zoning overlay ordinance.

We remind our neighbors that any opportunity to determine what type redevelopment happens on your street starts with the "Seller of the Parcel." Once the parcel has sold, it is in the hands of the buyer, who has the three by-right options listed above.

If you wish to attend a ZRC meeting, please contact Billy Almond at 757.235-0731 or via email at billy@wplsite.com for additional information in advance of our meetings.