

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

JULY 2023

A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

OFF LIMITS WE MUST PROTECT OUR N.E. DUNES

We like to have a good time at our NVBCL socials, but our primary job as your North End civic league is protecting the character of our neighborhood, including the dunes. To that end, the fight to retain control of short-term rentals is also crucial for us.

By Gary Sharpe
NVBCL president



THE SUMMER has been off to a slow start, but the civic league's work is moving ahead at a rapid pace. Thank you for taking the time to update yourself on the issues at hand and lending your support when needed to help our community.

Although the sun refused to cooperate at our summer solstice party in June, we had a wonderful time and turnout at the Surf Club Ocean Grille. Thank you to all who attended and for your support of our Civic League. And a BIG thanks to the Ocean Grille for hosting us and providing complimentary appetizers. Getting to meet and chat with our members and neighbors at our socials is my favorite part of being involved with the NVBCL. I look forward

to seeing you at this year's return of the big fall event at the PACC. (Details on Page 3, and more to follow)

As you know, we remain committed to the preservation of the dunes system, and we recently adopted an official position against any encroachment into the dunes beyond private property lines.

I am happy to report we have started to make significant progress removing existing encroachments and preventing new ones from moving forward. The help of our local community, members and the city has been instrumental in this effort, and we greatly appreciate your support – especially to those willing to get out and swing a hammer to help remove old encroaching structures. The dunes are an amazing natural resource to have in our backyards, and we look forward to continuing the effort to keep them free from disruption. (See *Beaches & Rec*, Page 2)

Our work continues on the short-term rentals front as we continue to try to help

Please see **PRESIDENT**, Page 2



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Seat at the table NVBCL gains a spot with a state agency shaping legislation on STRs

By Parker Hannahs and Andy Cohen
Government Affairs

NVBCL Board member Parker Hannahs was appointed to the Virginia Housing Commission Short-Term Rental Work Group when it held its first meeting, May 16, giving our civic league a state-level voice in shaping STR legislation.

It was thanks to 82nd District Del. Anne Ferrell Tata's efforts that Hannahs joined the group. The 82nd includes the Oceanfront.

At that meeting, Joseph Hudgins, vice president of the Independent Insurance Agents of Virginia, gave an update on changes to insurance



Parker Hannahs



Andy Cohen

standards in Virginia as applicable to STRs. As of Jan. 1, 2023, carriers in Virginia may require separate coverage for STRs with more than seven stays or more than \$2,500 of revenue in a policy year.

Then Lisa Robertson, former Char-

lottesville City Attorney, shared that city's experience with STRs since the 1960s and how city ordinances had evolved. She emphasized that every locality has different circumstances and must be able to regulate STRs accordingly. Work Group co-chair Laura Lafayette agreed; she is chief executive officer of the Richmond Association of Realtors.

Last on the agenda was public comments. The only speaker was Andy Cohen, NVBCL Board member and Government Affairs Committee co-chair, who explained the NVBCL's position as unanimously approved at our last membership meeting. That position is also stated in an NVBCL letter co-signed by

Please see **STRs**, Page 3



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

July 18, Oct. 17

Speaker for our July 18 meeting

Joel Rubin, president of Rubin Communications Group, a public relations consultant for Dominion Energy and the creator and director of the WINDSdays campaign.



Treasurer's report

Thank you to all members of the civic league who have paid their 2023 dues. Our membership stands at 822, and our assets are \$50,119.39.

This newsletter includes 2023 member-dues envelopes for those folks who have not yet paid their dues. 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.



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

PRESIDENT

From the front

shape the narrative through our efforts in Richmond. While the two STR bills introduced into the General Assembly last year, SB1391 and HB2271, did not pass, they were sent to the Housing Commission for review. The Housing Commission subsequently developed an STR work group to review the bills and recommend proposed changes to be introduced again this year. The workgroup comprises members with wide-ranging interests from VRBO, Airbnb, Realtors, the Home Builders Association of Virginia and local city representatives, just to name a few. (Related story on Page 1)

I am pleased to announce that of the 18 members selected statewide, our board member Parker Hannahs was able to secure a coveted spot on the work group to advocate on our behalf. I would like to thank Parker for his dedication to our civic league and his work on the STR issue. He has committed to being present in Richmond for the work group sessions and helping ensure our voice is heard. Please thank him for his efforts.

Every STR work group session has an opportunity for public comment, and very few people are taking the opportunity to speak and voice their opinions on this important topic. Please reach out to us if you are interested in lending your voice to support our cause, and we will keep you informed of upcoming sessions.

We fully expect new versions of these bills to be introduced this year that will once again challenge our local STR ordinances. Now is a critical time to speak up and potentially help change the version of the bills that will be submitted.

The speaker for our July 18 general membership meeting will be Joel Rubin, president of Rubin Communications Group and director of public relations for coastal Virginia offshore wind development. He will speak to us about the future of wind power in our area and the vision for changing Virginia Beach to a greener city and the underlying economic potential of this developing industry.

Thanks again, and I look forward to seeing you in July. ■

BEACHES & RECREATION



SKIP GIBSON PHOTOS | NVBCL

◀ Anne and Charlie Cole are the sand sweepers at 62nd Street, which they've adopted as NVBCL volunteers to keep their beach walkway cleared.



▲ Kim Forbes gets the job done when she can at 85th Street.

◀ Phil Curtain regularly brings his blower to bear on the beach walkway at 77th Street.



Sand duty NVBCL folks put it back where it belongs

By Skip Gibson
Beaches & Recreation

What does it take to maintain our beaches, dunes and walkways? The involvement of our civic league members!

A number of our NVBCL members have volunteered to be responsible for specific streets' beach walkways. In the accompanying photos, Anne and Charlie Cole have adopted 62nd Street, Phil Curtain regularly clears 77th and Kim Forbes is often seen clearing 85th.

Whenever there is a storm or period of thunderstorms, sand is blown from the dunes to the walkways, and when this happens our members kick into gear. They spend 30 to 60 minutes clearing the sand while getting a workout and suntan. We are fortunate to have many members who take actions that benefit all of us.

If you are interested in adopting a street, drop me an email, and I will add you to the growing list.

Over the past 30 years, the laws affecting what may and may not be done in the dunes has significantly changed. What once was accepted has given way to new awareness of the importance of our collective efforts to protect

the dunes.

We need everyone's help to protect them. The single most important action each person can take is simply to stay off the dunes and use the city walkways. There are many new residents and visitors to the Oceanfront who are not aware of the city ordinances protecting the dunes, and the city will soon be putting up additional "Stay off the Dunes" signs.

The dunes' sea grass, sea oats, trees and other vegetation are our first line of defense against storms and rising sea levels. Sea grass roots extend as deep as 5 feet below the surface; sea oats roots produce a massive root system that can grow up to 40 feet deep. These plants hold our dunes together and allow the flow of millions of gallons of water through the dunes without flooding.

We have been successfully working with individual residents and the city to remove from the dunes a wide variety of items such as platforms for beach chairs,

walkways from individual homes cutting through the dunes, and multiple individual pieces of equipment.

If you have a private walkway, structure or other item in the dunes, hopefully you can remove it. If you need assistance, please give me a call or send an email. The civic league also asks residents NOT to extend their yards or flower beds past their property lines and into the dunes. The ornamental plantings are destructive to the dunes by not having root structures sufficient to hold the dunes together.

I would like to ask everybody to please, stay off the dunes. Use the city walkways – protect our dunes!

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Out with the deck, in with a new garden filled with native flora

By Mary Reid Barrow

When Terri Gorman moved into her condo on Atlantic Avenue two and half years ago, her small backyard was as far from a native plant garden as it could be.

It was not a garden, not even a yard. It was all deck, save three wax myrtles adjacent to the deck edge.

Gorman, the Pearl Home coordinator for the conservation group Lynnhaven River NOW, went right to work and removed almost 1,000 square feet of decking. She replaced it with a garden, full of native flowers and shrubs.

"I had learned so much in my job about the importance of native plants to pollinators and also how grass and hard surfaces are bad for water quality," Gorman said. "I really wanted to try to do this in a small space."

This spring the garden was already doing so well that it was chosen as an example of small-

in the environment where they belong," Gorman said.

Landscape designer Meg French, and her friend Nancy Knewstep of Williamsburg, were among the 30

or so participants on the tour. Gorman's garden stood out as a "delightful niche garden," Knewstep said.

"When Meg and I walked up to the unit, we looked at each other and said, 'What could possibly be here?' Boy, were we surprised."

A gravel-covered path with stepping stones curves through the garden with beds on either side of the path. Native plants – like yellow coreopsis,

red and yellow blanket flower and deep blue spiderwort – along with a great pollinator magnet, mountain mint, were blooming the day of the tour. And busy bees and other insects were dining on their nectar.

"It is a true native oasis,"



MARY REID BARROW PHOTO

Lynnhaven River NOW's Native Plant Garden Tour in June included this small-space garden behind Terri Gorman's home on Atlantic Avenue. She took out her deck to convert the yard to garden.

space gardening on Lynnhaven River NOW's June Native Plant Garden Tour. A suburban yard and a waterfront garden also were on the tour.

"That my little garden grew so well in a little over a year is a great example of how native plants thrive

Knewstep added. And it just goes to prove something like that could be done with a little imagination that benefits the homeowner and nature!"

French agreed, saying it was a great example of a small native garden, "so doable for homeowners."

The garden already has qualified as a Homegrown National Park, a program that recognizes small native gardens for adding to the spaces that provide natural habitat for pollinators and other critters.

Gorman created her garden with the help of native plant landscape designer Trista Imrich, whose garden was also on the tour. Gorman also got funding from the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program, which provides financial aid for homeowners to create conservation gardens to reduce stormwater runoff.

Now that Gorman's garden is full of natives, she says there is the "snowball effect." She spends time not only looking for new blooms, but now she searches for what new insects have come to nectar on the blooms!

– Barrow is a North End resident and a member of Lynnhaven River NOW.

STRs

From the front

more than 500 of our members – thank you!

Andy concluded by saying that localities need more tools to manage STRs, not fewer. When Housing Commission Chairman Del. Danny Marshall (Danville) asked which tools he had in mind, Andy replied that state code §58.1-3 prohibits local tax authorities from sharing with other local agencies the addresses and owners of STRs paying occupancy taxes. Many STR owners pay those taxes but do not have the required permits, so sharing this taxpayer data would allow localities to identify noncompliant STRs and enforce their ordinances accordingly.

The next Work Group meeting was scheduled for 1 p.m. July 19. If you are interested in attending, contact Parker (Parker.Hannahs@lfg.com) or Andy (acohen@gmail.com).

VHC STR Work Group meeting schedules, agendas, summaries, recordings and member rosters are online at vhc.virginia.gov. ■

We're on Facebook

Just a reminder that our NVBCL Facebook page has been up and running for a year now. You may join by searching "North Virginia Beach Civic League" on Facebook. You must answer some security questions to gain access.

HOSPITALITY



Sensational Summer Solstice Social – next up, Fall Member Party

By Monica Stein
Hospitality

Truly, what a blast. Besides having an overwhelming turnout June 21, the staff at the Wyndham Ocean Grille was outstanding, and the live music was superb!

NVBCL Board member Mark Chase sang funky beach music from his published CD and new tunes.

Mark your calendars now for our next social – it's our biggest and best of the year!

Details at right.



MONICA STEIN PHOTOS | NVBCL

NVBCL director Mark Chase provided the tunes at the June social. Rain moved the party indoors at the Wyndham's Surf Club.

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for our

Fall Member Party

Where Princess Anne Country Club

When Friday, Oct. 13, 6 to 9 p.m.

What Dinner buffet, cash bar, live music by Dog Jaw

Cost \$45 per ticket, for all NVBCL members

Always a sold-out event and the best party of the season.

Stay tuned for more information via email, Facebook and neighborhood news.

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

P.O. Box 1676, Virginia Beach, VA 23451
contact@nvbcl.org
www.nvbcl.org

2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President	Gary Sharpe	757.544-0885 gary.sharpe.iii@gmail.com
Vice President	Skip Gibson	757.617-2824 skip.gibson50@gmail.com
Treasurer/Membership	Bonner Styles	757.831-3439 mbonnors@yahoo.com
Executive Secretary	Linda Palluch	757.641-0410 lpalluch@gmail.com
Past President	John David	757.748-3131 johndavid2@verizon.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS (Phone numbers must include 757)

Beaches & Recreation

Skip Gibson, 617-2824, skip.gibson50@gmail.com

Beautification

Jim Spruance, 646-1225, jhspruance@cox.net

Budget/Assessments/Taxes

Jake Denton, 647-8259, jake@jeremiahdenton.com

Government Affairs

Jayna Eller, 773-1250 jaynaeller@gmail.com
Andy Cohen, (703) 855-2184, acohen@gmail.com

Hospitality

Monica Stein, 636-0222, monica.stein@n2pub.com

Meetings/Publicity/Social Media

Caroline Willcox, cwillcox@rogers.com

Newsletter

Don Naden, 491-4483, dnaden71@gmail.com

Streets/Utilities/Public Safety

Martin Waranch, 491-3343, mlwaranch@outlook.com

Zoning Issues

Billy Almond, 422-9522, billy@wpsite.com

AREA DIRECTORS

42nd – 49th	Willy Fluharty	965-2173 willyflu@gmail.com
50th – 59th	Mark Chase	491-1729 chasemark@msn.com
60th – 69th	David McDaniels	348-3386 mcdanieldavid72@gmail.com
70th – 79th	Steve Kelley	450-6019 stekel4@cox.net
80th – 89th	Larry Staunton	428-1514 larrystaunton@cox.net

Princess Anne Hills Liaison
Mike Byrnes, 434-3200, mikebyrnes@cox.net

Find more information on our website, nvbcl.org.

Annual dues for 2023 are \$20.

You can pay online, at www.nvbcl.org, or send a check (payable to NVBCL) to P.O. Box 1676, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

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Have you paid your \$20 dues for 2023?

STREETS/UTILITIES/SAFETY

LIVE ON A CORNER? PLEASE KEEP IT CLEAR

By Martin Waranch
Streets & Utilities

A major traffic concern is the “cone of visibility.” Drivers attempting to get onto Atlantic Avenue *must* be able to see north and south. Anyone living on any of the corners needs to ensure their landscaping does *not* interfere with this. While most folks know this and take care of it, there are absent owners who don’t. If you don’t know whom to contact, call me and I will process your request.

Given the bad press smoking has gotten, I remain amazed at the cigarette butts I pick up daily. Per earlier messages, I enjoy getting “double dooty” out of Charlie’s poop bag. There are a *lot* of neighbors doing all they can to keep the feeder road and beach clean.

ZONING ISSUES

By Billy Almond
Zoning Review Committee

The NVBCL Zoning Review Committee continues to work on several initiatives with City of Virginia Beach’s planning staff to revise regulations as they pertain to redevelopment. The issues under discussion are these:

Remaining nonconforming parcel re-subdivisions into new nonconforming parcels is under study.

■ “Two Detached Cottage” option only allowed on 7,500 square foot parcels or larger

■ Revisions the R5RNE zoning ordinance to allow “garage apartments” or “detached dwelling units “by-right”

■ Establishment of the R5RE Zoning/Civil inspector and contact

■ The city’s Zoning Ordinance definition of impervious cover with respect to permeable pavement systems

■ Property line vacation requirements for redevelopment

The ZRC will continue to participate in the Planning Department discussions and will report the outcome of the final resolutions to the NVBCL general membership as soon as possible.

BEAUTIFICATION



JIM SPRUANCE | NVBCL

The last oleander standing in the Atlantic median recently – the beds might be replaced by trees.

END OF THE OLEANDERS – REST IN PEACE

By Jim Spruance
Beautification

Going, going ... gone.

After a brutal winter a few years ago, and many subsequent seasons of chances to recover, the anemic Atlantic Avenue median oleanders were removed by the city’s Landscape Division this past June. While they survived in some local yards, the median oleanders were probably just too exposed to the ravages of salt air and cold winds.

Asked about a landscape replacement, Kenny Denson of the Landscape Division replied, “We will most likely replace with trees, but not 100 percent decided yet.” What with contracting, bidding and seasonal planting, we can probably expect a successor by spring 2024.

I also would like to commend my “Ghost Beautification Committee” (membership unknown to me) who continue to keep the Atlantic median clear of errant signage and trash. Thank a neighbor for doing their part.