

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

JANUARY 2025

A LETTER FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

CIVIC LEAGUE CONTINUES TO GROW, ADDRESSES MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES

THIS IS THE FIRST newsletter of 2025, and we hope the holiday found you surrounded by family and friends celebrating the meaning of the season. Our civic league has much to be grateful for, starting with our membership – which is key to the North End character and numerous successes achieved over the past several years. I thank each of you for your interest and involvement and wish you a very happy New Year!

By Skip Gibson
NVBCL president



Our October guest speaker was Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata, who provided a very informative presentation regarding her actions to support North End residents.

She is in the middle of her second term representing the 99th District, which consists of an estimated 85,000 residents. She has a passion for a number of areas, and she spoke on three of them – supporting our military, foster care and support for individuals with disabilities. She has sponsored legislation focusing on Foster Care for Kids, Human Trafficking, Health Care Training and Antisemitism.

Del. Tata is also protective of localities and works very closely with Virginia Beach officials to ensure our priorities are heard in the General Assembly. She supported city efforts to obtain \$7 million in state funding for the new water treatment facility and an \$11 million grant for city infrastructure. In times of tight budgets, these were true wins for our residents! She also has been working directly with two of our NVBCL Board members – Parker Hannas and Andy Cohen – regarding short-term rentals legislation. This is a true testament to her position of ensuring our voices being heard in Richmond.

Del Tata is also focused on the future: she sits on the Science and Technology



Delegate Anne
Ferrell Tata

Committee and the Subcommittee for Artificial Intelligence. AI has the potential to provide significant new business and financial opportunity to the economy and our region. She is also engaged in tracking the Offshore Wind Turbine pending bill(s) and the benefits it can bring to the city. She also made one point abundantly clear: She wants to hear from us as a civic league and individuals. If you have an issue or concern, she asks that you contact her office to discuss it.

Del. Anne Ferrell Tata has proven to be a seasoned voice working in a bipartisan manner to address the many issues facing Virginia Beach. She works large, complex issues and individual concerns, but they are all equally important. In my opinion, we are fortunate to have her as our delegate.

The North Virginia Beach Civic League (NVBCL) continues to grow and address a series of issues. Here's an update to some of the ongoing activities.

Please see **PRESIDENT**, Page 3

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

January 15, April 16 –
Remember, we've changed
from Tuesdays to the 3rd
Wednesday of the month

Speaker for our Jan. 15 meeting

City Manager
Patrick Duhany
will be our guest
speaker for the
Jan. 15 general
member-ship
meeting. He was
city manager in
Cincinnati, Ohio,
before becoming
Virginia Beach's
city manager in
July 2020. He



City Manager
Patrick Duhany

will be able to discuss a multitude of topics, including the city budget, revenue and taxation as well as ongoing and future infrastructure, public safety and planning issues. This should be a very good meeting with one of the city's key individuals, who can answer many of your questions.



Treasurer's report

Thank you to all civic league members who paid their 2024 dues. At the end of December our membership stood at 898, and our assets were \$41,338.84.

This newsletter includes envelopes for paying your 2025 member dues. Our annual dues are \$25, 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

Sand management is also our job

By David McDaniel
Beaches & Recreation



We often get asked about cleaning the sand off our individual beach walkways, and this is our responsibility as good neighbors to keep them clear from trash and sand from daily usage.

If the amount of sand can be swept or blown off with a leaf blower, that's our job to do. It's a privilege to live where we do, and we should be good stewards for our neighbors and others who want to enjoy this amazing beach. However, when a storm significantly blows a lot of sand onto the walkways, Beach Operations has the necessary equipment (bobcat) and once notified will come and clear large amounts of sand from the bench area down to the level sand line of the beach.

If a storm blows excessive sand over your boardwalk, notify me (contact info is on Page 4) or the Public Works Department directly: (757) 385-4167.

It's winter, so we go to the beach less often – but that doesn't mean there's no activity down there.

Beach Ops is happy to report the city will install completely new gates at three restricted-access points to our beach: 57th, 68th and 79th streets. They will be galvanized steel posts with aluminum gates. The timeline wasn't pinned down as of press time, but Beach Ops reports this should happen sometime over the winter.

I had reported in the April newsletter that the Army Corps of Engineers would perform beach replenishment from 16th to 42nd streets during the summer. Well, obviously that didn't happen, but there seems to be a firmer start date now. The project *should* begin around the end of January if all other projects the Corps is working on go as planned. This is a necessary project for the resort area, especially in the lower 20s streets – that area has suffered some notable erosion in recent weeks.

Public safety phone numbers

2nd Precinct Police, (757) 385-2700

Nonemergency police, (757) 385-5000, option 3

Fire/police emergency, 911

VA Beach manages budget by anticipating rising costs

By Donald Redmond

Budget & Taxes

When the Virginia Beach City Council adopted the city's fiscal 2024-25 budget May 14, the annual budget of more than \$2.6 billion was just under a 3 percent increase from the prior fiscal year -- not exactly a spending blowout.

Like everyone, municipalities have struggled to contend with the inflation of the past few years. No matter where blame for inflation can be assigned, it is certainly true that cities, counties and towns have struggled to meet municipal employees' higher wage and benefit expectations, and increasing costs of everyday items like gasoline, facilities management and maintenance of our unique hometown assets. The care of our beaches, parks and schools became more expensive, just like the cost of eggs and bread.

Many of us were disappointed in the reduction of our real estate tax rate from 99 to 97 cents per \$100 of assessed value. However, it is important to remember that we still have the lowest tax rate of any South Side city. For example, the rate in Norfolk is \$1.23 per \$100 of assessed value -- do that math on your assessment.

It's also likely the case that our property values increased last year more dramatically than most other neighborhoods. There are roughly 186,000 homes in Virginia Beach, and our neighborhoods are not all alike. Coastline is finite and valuable, so we and our North End neighbors feel the pinch more acutely.

As we ease into 2025, we will see many changes at all levels of government. We already have new City Council members and statewide elections next year. Our NVBCL leadership will closely monitor budget and tax issues to ensure that our neighborhood is well represented, heard and listened to on economic matters that are important to us.

NVBCL continues keeping tabs on STR and ADU bills

By Andy Cohen

Legislative Affairs

Our Legislative Affairs Committee is watching for legislative bills on Short-Term Rentals (STRs) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the 2025 Virginia General Assembly session, which runs through Feb. 22.

As in prior years, we will be prepared to act quickly as bills are filed and scheduled for committee hearings. When that happens, we will let you know how you can help. We appreciate your help in contacting our legislators!

STRs: As of Dec. 10 only one STR bill had been pre-filed. House Bill 1557 (See link at NVBCL.org for STRs and ADUs) is identical to HB695 that died in committee in the 2024 session. This bill would require STR platforms, including Airbnb and VRBO, to provide data to substantiate the occupancy taxes they pay to localities, and it would give localities the authority to require those platforms to remove listings of noncompliant STRs. NVBCL supported HB695 in the 2024 session, and we expect to support HB1557 in the 2025 session.

ADUs: In the 2024 session, Senate Bill 304 (same link at NVBCL.org for STRs and ADUs) would have allowed an attached or detached ADU on any single-family residential lot. We expect a similar bill to be introduced in the 2025 session. NVBCL supports allowing more ADUs in the North End within appropriate limitations, including that ADUs may not be used as STRs, but we opposed SB304 because it went too far in pre-empting local authority to determine those limitations. We met with the bill's patron, who was receptive to our input on how to improve it if they file it for the 2025 session.

STR Enforcement Task Force: Task force chair Andy Cohen is working with city staff to finalize the task force report and recommendations in preparation for presenting them to City Council, tentatively scheduled for Jan. 21.

Links to NVBCL STR/ADU page:

2025 House Bill 1557 Short-term rentals; Department of Taxation to establish a registry, civil penalty: <https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20251/HB1557>

2024 Senate Bill 304 Development and use of accessory dwelling units: <https://legacylis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?241+ful+SB304E2S1>

Overall crime down in the city

By Mary Souther

NVBCL's CAC Representative

Seven categories of crime in Virginia Beach declined by double digits last year, according to statistics presented Nov. 13 to the Police 2nd Precinct Citizens Advisory Committee.

The following are year-over-year data as of Sept. 30 for reported crimes in the entire city, according to 2nd Precinct Commander Capt. Bradley Wessler:

- Criminal homicides down 54.9 percent
- Shooting incidents down 47 percent
- Overall violent crime down 15.3 percent
- Rapes down 22.9 percent
- Aggravated assaults down 18.9 percent
- Thefts of motor vehicles down 27.9 percent
- Larcenies from motor vehicles down 40 percent

Capt. Wessler also reported that Virginia Beach hosted 14.1 million overnight guests last year who spent an estimated \$2.5 billion, according to the city manager's office. CAC President Connie Agresti said this revenue translates into a tax offset of almost \$1,800 per household.

During the Christmas and New Year's holidays, Wessler said the police planned to increase patrols of mall parking lots, but he described actions we can take to protect ourselves all throughout the year: Always be aware walking to your car, and if you feel unsafe return to the store; park in well-lighted areas and lock your vehicle as soon as you exit or enter it; do not unlock your vehicle from a distance because the beep or flashing lights can alert potential thieves; beware of anyone loitering, looking into vehicles or testing vehicle handles, and notify police or mall security of suspicious activity; keep your purse latched or zippered closed and on your person -- cross-body straps are more secure than over-the-shoulder straps.

Regrettably, mass shootings do occur, and malls are so-called "soft" targets. If you hear gunshots and cannot readily exit the mall, go to the deepest part of a store and shelter in place. Silence the ringer on your phone, and text 911.

Ellen McBride's long journey with Virginia Beach Rescue

By Gina Benefiel

Virginia Beach Rescue Foundation

In the bustling coastal city of Virginia Beach, where millions of visitors and residents alike depend on emergency medical services, dedicated volunteers like Ellen McBride stand as pillars of the community's emergency response system. A longtime resident of 78th Street in the North End, McBride embodies the neighborhood's spirit of community service through her role as a Life Member of the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad, an organization that has proudly served the North End and greater Virginia Beach for more than 70 years.

The Volunteer Rescue Squad operates entirely through the generous support of public donations. Community members can contribute directly to this vital service through their secure donation page at <https://vbvrs.networkforgood.com/>, ensuring the squad can maintain its fleet of ambulances, purchase life-saving equipment and keep their facilities operational. This community support is particularly crucial in the North End, where residents have historically shown strong commitment to maintaining excellent emergency medical services.

McBride's commitment to these emergency medical services has manifested through various leadership roles within the organization. Most notably, she served as Chief of the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad during 2014 and 2015, overseeing operations in the busy Oceanfront area. The Oceanfront squad faces unique challenges, responding to emergencies in one of the city's most populous and tourist-heavy districts, particularly during the peak summer season. Her leadership capabilities and dedication to the community didn't stop there. Over the past two years, McBride took on a crucial role as Volunteer Deputy Chief with the Department of EMS. In this position, she has helped coordinate and oversee operations across all 10 volunteer rescue squads that comprise the VB Rescue Volunteer EMS system, ensuring that each squad maintains the highest standards of emergency medical care and service delivery.

The Life Member status bestowed upon McBride by the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad speaks volumes about her long-term commitment to the organization. Her journey through the ranks of our emergency medical services system showcases the vital role that volunteers play in keeping the community safe. Her progression from squad member to chief, and now to a systemwide leadership



Please see RESCUE, Page 3

Our Fall Social hit a new high at the Hilton's Sky Bar

By Monica Stein
Hospitality

On a beautiful evening in October, friends and neighbors gathered at the Sky Bar, atop the Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel.

The management and staff went above and beyond to welcome us in an effort to be good stewards of our community and host our local civic league. The rainbow that graced the horizon just before sunset was a sure sign that our civic league members gathered in a beautiful place. It is the most incredible view of the Oceanfront! Make it a point to visit the Sky Bar's Igloo Lounges this winter to take in the views and book your own heated igloo. It is open to the public, and we can guarantee a WOW! Contact the Hilton, 31st Street at Atlantic Avenue, for reservations. We plan to host a Winter Social in February or March -- stay tuned for details.



North Virginia Beach Civic League members gathered atop the Hilton Oceanfront on Oct. 22 to enjoy the view and each other's company

Monica Stein photos/NVBCL



Zoning Review Committee

By Billy Almond
Zoning Committee

The NVBCL Zoning Review Committee continues to review applicants' requests for variances at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month. Recently the meetings have been held virtually via Zoom. If you wish to meet with the ZRC, please let us know -- contact information is at the end of this report.

Construction at the North End continues to be very active. Property owners are selling 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 remind our neighbors that developers have three options for North End properties: single-family house, duplex or two detached cottages on one parcel. The detached-cottage option is an incentive-based design guideline, and a developer must comply with the design criteria in the zoning overlay ordinance.

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

We are seeing an increase in illegal, nonpermitted construction including driveway expansions, shed construction, decks, terraces, fences and house additions. If you see construction on your street and do not see a city building permit visibly displayed on the property, please contact any member of the ZRC or call the city's Permits and Inspections office at (757) 385-8060.

If you wish to attend a NVBCL ZRC meeting, please contact Billy Almond at (757) 235-0731 or billy@wplsite.com for additional information in advance of our meetings.

48th Street Pump Update

Now that it's been moved, connected and the grass has grown back, the 48th Street Sanitary Pumping Station project is done. After about 15 months, work ended in November, Project Manager Dawn Ray G. Panaguiton confirms. "The pump station replacement has been completed," she said Dec. 10, "and the one-year warranty is in effect until Oct. 21, 2025."

PRESIDENT

From the front

Changes. We have been filling positions and adding new members to our Board of Directors to address major issues facing the North End. Beginning with this newsletter, there is an increased focus on city fiscal planning, infrastructure and public safety. The city's annual plan and budget most often affect our members in terms of increased or new taxes. The board members leading these committees are renewing their efforts to meet with city officials at the division level (such as Public Works and Commissioner of the Revenue) to gain a deeper understanding of proposed city actions. This also will give us direct-line communication to the responsible individual(s) in the city and keep you better informed.

Budget/Assessment/Taxes

Committee. Don Redmond has joined the board and will chair this committee. A long-term North End resident, Don has spent a career working with the General Assembly and cities focusing on legislative and regulatory efforts.



He also has served on the Virginia Chamber of Commerce board. I'm confident Don will provide unique experience and understanding to this role. Please join me in welcoming him to our board.

October Social Event. This was the social event of the year! Hospitality chair Monica Stein chose an absolutely great location -- the Hilton Hotel Sky Bar on a perfect October evening. Well over 150 of our members attended and were treated to a double rainbow to the east and an ideal sunset with distant clouds to the west. As the sun set, the stars rose over the darkening ocean -- truly a magical setting! Those attending signed in at a table staffed by Linda Palluch and Kay Harris who truly worked very hard to quickly get everyone up the elevators to the rooftop Sky Bar. Prior to the event, Monica and Linda met with the hotel management to ensure that there were enough bartenders and waiters, that the appetizers were plentiful and delicious, and that the venue was ready to receive us.



Monica, Linda and Kay knocked themselves out to ensure all of us had a great time. Kudos to the three of them!



Newsletter. The North Virginia Beach Civic League News is one feature I most often hear about that our membership looks forward to receiving. Our newsletter is edited and put together by Don Naden.

As a former newspaperman and long-time North End resident, Don is always trying to provide us with the best possible product. He spends many hours editing the committee submissions, laying

out pages and preparing the newsletter for publication to keep us all informed. (He's been traveling during this issue's production and has gotten key help from Jennie Evans, also a North Ender, who designed the pages.)

The next time you see Don, please give him a hearty thank you.

Behind the scenes. While there are a number of board members, the civic league has two officers who make everything run smoothly and efficiently: Secretary Linda Palluch and Treasurer Bonner



Styles are key members of the civic league leadership team who show up every day to make the NVBCL so successful. of the civic league leadership team who show up every day to make the NVBCL so successful.

RESCUE

From Page 2



position, illustrates the opportunities for growth and impact available to dedicated volunteers in the EMS system. The VB Rescue system, comprising 10 volunteer rescue squads that work collaboratively in our city under the umbrella of the city's Department of Emergency Medical Services, comprises volunteers such as McBride -- over 280 people serve this system as nationally certified volunteer EMTs, and we have the largest volunteer corps of EMS providers serving VB Rescue in the entire country.

As Virginia Beach continues to grow and evolve, leaders like Ellen McBride help ensure that the city's emergency medical services remain strong, volunteer-driven and community-focused. You, too, can make a difference by sharing this information with a neighbor, with volunteering as a provider or an administrative support member or donating to the Virginia Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad.

To inquire about volunteering, visit VBRescue.org. The continued support of North End residents and the broader Virginia Beach community through donations at <https://vbvrs.networkforgood.com/> remains crucial to maintaining this essential emergency service that helps save lives every day.

Gina Benefiel is executive director of the foundation. Reach her at gbenefiel@vbrescuefoundation.org.



Don Naden | NVBCL

North Virginia Beach Civic League News

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contact@nvbcl.org
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2025 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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70th – 79th	Steve Kelley (757) 450-6019 stekel4@cox.net
80th – 89th	Larry Staunton (757) 428-1514 larrystaunton@cox.net

Find more information on our website, nvbcl.org.

Annual dues for 2025 are \$25

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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Getting to know my new role with the NVBCL

By John Weech

Streets/Utilities/Public Safety

Over a series of three days recently, I met with representatives from the city's Public Works Department divisions for stormwater, traffic and waste management. As the new chair of the Streets/Utilities/Public Safety Committee, I wanted to meet the folks I'll be interacting with in my new role and wanted to get a better understanding of the issues important to our civic league.

Each group complemented our willingness to reach out, and they also said the NVBCL was a good partner for them. They'd be happy to speak at one of our regular meetings.

For the stormwater folks, the issues are beach replenishment/nourishment (although not as much at the North End) and maintaining the stormwater pumping stations along Atlantic Avenue. There is bond money available for this, and their comprehensive

plans are available on the city's website: virginia-beach.gov – search Stormwater, then then click on Stormwater – Planning.

For the traffic folks, the main issues were the proposed pedestrian crosswalk improvements along Atlantic Avenue and the issue of encroachments into the public right-of-way along the numbered streets and their effect on parking. Homeowners often plant bushes in the ROW or they extend landscaping and driveways wider than 12 feet – some with pavers and gravel.

They will be working with us more to enforce and address these encroachments and to prevent abuses. Each year before Memorial Day, traffic staffers drive around looking for offenders.

Waste management folks' main issues are the tight turning radii for their collection trucks as well as live oak branches interfering with the trucks' lift mechanisms. A few weeks ago one such branch caused extensive damage to a truck.

These meetings were very productive and allowed me to get to know the city folks I'll be dealing with.

Dunes protection survey results

By Skip Gibson

NVBCL President

In the last newsletter I asked a series of questions regarding "should we do more to protect the dunes?"

Of about 85 emails, calls and conversations received, only three Oceanfront residents suggested that encroachments were acceptable in the dunes. All the other responses were that we should do everything possible to protect and maintain the dunes.

The following summarizes the responses – "The dunes on Virginia Beach are our first line of defense against storms, tidal surges and rising sea levels. The beach and the dunes belong to the city and, therefore, to everyone – not to any individual ..." Other responses: "Listen to the VRMC, VIMS, Lynnhaven River Now and other environmental engineers who emphatically state, "Stay off and stay out of the dunes."

The NVBCL Board of Directors unanimously voted several years ago in favor of fully protecting the dunes. We will continue to listen to our members and work with the city to find the best possible solutions to do just that.



A "Private Walkway" has been built on public city land in our North End dunes.