

OANA General Meeting Minutes 11-16-2022

The November General Meeting was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order at approximately 6:10 pm. Around 45 people were in attendance, including 6 representatives from the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office. The agenda was presented on a slideshow.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the first guest speaker was Rene Broussard from Zeitgeist Theater & Lounge. He announced that Zeitgeist would also be organizing programming for the new St. Claude Arts Park, next to Zeitgeist, and partnering with the Art Studio in the St. Claude Arts building. Zeitgeist offers films every day, live music and spoken word events. The Arts Park plans to hold monthly art markets beginning in January, and will also be available for charity and private event rentals. Several concerts and festivals are already scheduled for December, including the closing party for PhotoNOLA featuring Bruce Sunpie Barnes in concert, and a literary arts festival. Rene will also host a Thanksgiving Potluck for anyone interested, and reminded us that Zeitgeist offers several yearly membership levels for free films and reduced concert fees. For schedules and more info, go to: <https://www.zeitgeistnola.org>.

The next featured guest speaker was St. Bernard Sheriff James Pohlmann, to explain the importance of passing the millage proposal on the December 10th ballot. He first introduced Colonel Chad Clark of the Criminal Investigation unit, an Arabi resident, who gave an example of the department's quick response to a recent bomb threat — fortunately a false alarm, but on the scene in minutes and resolved in just over an hour, as compared to expected response times from NOPD. In all, Clark said, St. Bernard has only had one homicide, 6 robberies, 73 burglaries and 286 assaults so far this year, with 1689 arrests. The department also has a very high "solve rate" for crimes reported. These statistics are remarkable, considering that 50% of violent crime in New Orleans takes place in N.O. East and the 9th Ward, the two districts bordering our parish. Sheriff Pohlmann then outlined the challenges the department faces, as it finds itself shorthanded and struggles to recruit and retain officers, since surrounding parishes offer yearly salaries of up to \$10,000 more. Longevity pay increases are currently capped at 10 years, but the Sheriff would like to raise that to 25 years. The proposed millage would yield \$4.7 million for higher salaries, as well as basic current expenses such as fuel costs, record-keeping, supporting 280 employees, body cams, training, jail maintenance, overdose response, tax collection and security. Attendees were encouraged to take a yard sign supporting SBSO and the ballot initiative.

The meeting then took a look back at OANA's Fall Festivities. A huge crowd enjoyed the return of Sugar Fest on October 8th, after a 2-year hiatus due to COVID. The Fall Series of Sippin' in the Sunset featured Kenny Kerth Jass on Sept. 15th and Gal Holiday & The Honky Tonk Revue on Nov. 10th. Night Out Against Crime was held on October 4th at Arabi Food Store (thanks to Max Landry & staff for providing refreshments); The St. Claude Arts Park held its ribbon cutting ceremony on October 21st, the same date as Movie Night at OAB, our Fall Member Social (thanks to Charlie Rareshide & Old Arabi Bar for screening Hocus Pocus and providing popcorn & hot dogs); and our Halloween Trick or Treat Map had a record 52 houses participating.

Upcoming holiday events were announced:

- neutral ground decorating on Nov. 26/27, organized by OANA's Marie Cossé
- Shop Small St. Bernard on Saturday, Nov. 26th, with participating businesses throughout the Parish and an evening celebration at Brewster's Restaurant
- OANA Members' & Sugar Fest Patron/Volunteer Party Dec. 1st, 6-8 pm at The Kitchen Table Café
- Christmas at the Complex Dec. 2nd
- Los Isleños Christmas Bonfire Dec. 3rd
- Christmas Caroling & Holiday Cheer on Dec. 21st, 6 pm at 6619 N Peters St. — bring your own chairs & cheer!

OANA Board Elections are coming up in May of 2023. All Board positions are open for election/re-election to a two-year term, and consist of four Executive Officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and 3-5 additional Board Members.

Nominations are open to all Active Members and must be submitted in writing by April 30th; voting is open to all Active Members with dues current as of the election meeting on May 17th, 2023. More information to come at the January 2023 General Meeting; duties of Board and election guidelines are in the OANA Bylaws at www.oldarabi.org/bylaws-minutes.

In News & Notables, congratulations to:

- Louis & Izzy Maistros on the grand opening of Old Arabi Lighthouse Records & Books, November 26th; regular hours are Th-Sun 11-7
- Troy Barrios for selling the former Waffle House
- Jacob Zearis, Old Arabi resident, on purchasing that property, now known as 6720 St. Claude, for a new plant nursery & retail shop opening soon

and condolences to Joy Alexander for the death of her daughter, Jill — both members of OANA who lost their family home in the tornado.

Neighborhood Notables:

- there's a new 3-way stop sign at the intersection of Friscoville and Janssen — hopefully people will learn to stop for it!
- the vacant land that was to be the site of a 5-story, 180+ unit apartment building has been listed for sale; seems the original plan has fallen through (*met with applause*)

A final announcement was made for Sama Yoga Studio's year-end fundraiser, scheduled for November 20th at The Kitchen Table Café courtyard; OANA is one of the event sponsors.

Members wanting to get more involved were reminded of a list of OANA committees. Door prizes were awarded, everyone was thanked for coming and reminded of the next General meeting date, January 18th. The meeting was adjourned just after 7 p.m.

