

OANA General Meeting Minutes 03-16-2022

The March General Meeting was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order at 6:12 p.m. Just over 50 people were in attendance to follow the agenda as presented on a slideshow.

President Alison Barrios welcomed the attendees and led the Pledge of Allegiance, then introduced the first speaker, Muriel Altikriti, co-owner of Pirogue's Whiskey Bayou. The bar is hosting a monthly Backyard Art Market, featuring different local vendors and food & drink specials each time. Tonight there would be raw and chargrilled oysters, and all were invited to stop by after the meeting. There is also live music on Saturdays, and an April Fools meatball cook-off with a mechanical bull ride is being planned. The business is now celebrating its 5th year anniversary.

Katherine Lemoine spoke briefly about Pelicans & Pearls, the upcoming Nunez Foundation Gala. It will be held at Docville Farm on March 26th, 5-8 p.m., and is an important fundraiser for the community college foundation.

Some great photos taken at the Old Arabi Lundi Gras Walking Parade on February 28th were shown. This was the 3rd annual (minus one year) event hosted jointly by OANA and The St. Claude Heights Neighborhood Association. Starting at the 40 Arpent Brewery Taproom, over 200 enthusiastic participants paraded through the neighborhood, with stops at Pirogue's Whiskey Bayou, Zeitgeist Theatre, and Old Arabi Bar. Special thanks went to various supporters and OANA volunteers (see slideshow).

An overview of the top responses in our recent member survey was presented. There were many good ideas in all the categories: Suggested Speakers/Topics, New Events, Neighborhood Improvement Projects, Items of Concern, and New/Additional Committees (see the slideshow for details). Some of the proposals will be addressed very soon: a plant swap is planned for the May meeting, and future speakers will be considered from the list of suggestions. There will be signup sheets for committees at the next meeting as well, and everyone is invited to get more involved to help these great ideas become reality.

One of the concerns most often mentioned in the survey — speeding, speeding, speeding — was addressed by our second speaker, Lt. Eric Eilers from the St. Bernard Sheriff's Office. He began by pointing out that the worst offenders are Domino's employees, trucks going to Domino's, and our very own residents. Ticketing one truck leads to that driver signaling anyone behind him. Ticketing residents leads to complaints, though many thought it would be fine to ticket neighbors. There were several suggestions & comments from the audience:

- better signage on St. Claude to direct trucks to Aycock St., and more "No Truck Route" signs on residential streets; problems are that trucks' GPS systems often send them the wrong way, and too often signs don't get read
- Domino's employees are especially bad in the early mornings
- there needs to be a traffic study before any new apartments are built
- cars that park for hours on the pad next to the Jail seem creepy

- what if Sheriff's Office parked decoy vehicles in strategic spots; problem is they get vandalized

Citizens can appeal to the Sheriff's Office traffic division for a traffic study, and there are electronic speed checking signs, though several requests for them to be placed on our streets were made quite a long time ago. Many of the problems will be solved when the new access road to Domino's is built. That's a project of the DOTD, which may go forward as new federal funds become available.

Lt. Eilers reminded us that the Sheriff's Office can only enforce laws already on the books. Liaison meetings between OANA and Domino's might help solve some of the problems involving their employees.

Community notices

- An OANA-sponsored blood drive for Mary Nadler is scheduled for March 26th, 9am - 2pm at the Community Center.
- The St. Bernard Community Center is a designated charity for the Crescent City Classic, and OANA is partnering with them to sponsor runners. A donation of \$500 has been made, and will be split among member runners to go towards their \$200 fundraising goal. There are other good perks for charity runners.
- Sippin' in the Sunset will be back on March 31st and May 26th, with music by Christian Serpas Duo and George Ricks (plus Tongue & Groove), respectively. Volunteers are always needed — talk to a board member or email oldarabi@gmail.com.
- Support Hogs for the Cause at Canseco's this weekend.

Members' News & Notables

- Condolences to Lynda Catalanotto, on the passing of her husband Sam, an active member & supporter of OANA, and to Marie Cossé on the passing of her brother.
- Congratulations to Troy Barrios, on having a photo of his published in a United Way national publication.

A slide with the 2022 Calendar of Events came next, and a list of committees followed. OANA always encourages members to get more involved in these activities.

Door prizes were awarded. Attendees were thanked for coming, and reminded that the next meeting will be on May 18th, featuring a plant swap, an Arabi/St. Bernard Real Estate Report, and the OANA yearly Financial Report. The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm.