

OANA General Meeting Minutes 09-25-19

The September General Meeting, held at the Maumus Center, was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at around 6 p.m. Just under 30 people attended.

Information about the documentary “Locked”, a 13-minute video covering the history and decades-long community action opposing the Lock Replacement Project that would severely impact our neighborhood, was shared. The Holy Cross Neighborhood group was showing it tonight, but it can be accessed on the internet. See slide show for details.

The September 19th Sippin’ in the Sunset drew a big crowd and a \$1000 donation to the Culinary Scholarship fund from Debbie Smith. Parking concerns due to lack of access to the adjacent properties will be an ongoing problem. The owner wants \$1000/ event to use the lots until they are sold to the Parish —we cannot afford to pay that for Sippin’, but will need the space for Sugar Fest. We will seek further grants and sponsorships for this, the music, and other costs.

Councilman Gillis McCloskey spoke about drainage problems in our neighborhood, following a meeting of interested parties in the area that took place the day before. Through a series of slides, McCloskey explained several of the issues involved. Jackson Barracks has a master plan to address flooding around its property. On our side, Public Works acknowledges that the drainage pipes are too small to carry water from us to the Aycock Canal; a New Orleans culvert shared with us is also not big enough. A \$5.5M project is being developed in several phases, with DOTD permits needed to cross the highways. A future New Orleans model will show their weaknesses and influence our approach. Retention ponds will be included. Already in progress in our neighborhood is Phase 2.2 of drainage and water line conversions, with some flooding caused by the street work itself. Contractor “Infinity” on Lebeau is particularly slow and problematic, with drains clogged by sand; the contractor is supposed to be clearing them.

McCloskey kindly presented us with a \$500 check to go towards access to the neighbor’s properties for Sugar Fest. He also mentioned that grant money is ready for Phase 3 of the Old Arabi master plan, which will address trash cans on the levee, a bike trail, and acquiring those properties between the Barn and the Jail. He also mentioned that the lock replacement project is far in the future, as there is much to resolve, with more impact studies required and many legal battles ahead. Mitigation funds may be available at some point.

On the Beautification front:

- our totem pole came crashing down; the art work is fine, new pole solutions are being investigated
- the “Welcome to Old Arabi” sign should be installed as soon as the weather is cooler
- a dead tree on the neutral ground is not our responsibility

The upcoming Census is very important to our area, as we may regain representation that was lost due to post-Katrina population declines. Everyone is urged to respond to the U.S.Census 2020 count.

The 11th Annual Sugar Fest is coming up on Saturday, October 12th. The music lineup was announced, and the fest will feature a Dessert Baking Competition, a donut-eating contest, and tours of the cultural arts district. A link to Bill Hyland's Old Arabi Historic Tour was provided (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgvl72WVbhE>). A short Sugar Fest Committee Meeting, which interested members were invited to attend, followed this meeting.

Besides Sugar Fest, other upcoming events are:

- Night Out Against Crime, Tuesday, October 15th, 6-8 p.m. at the Old Jail/Sugar Museum
- Trick-or-Treating for Halloween, Thursday, October 31st; sign up to participate at Night Out, or watch for email instructions to get on the map
- Sippin' in the Sunset, Thursday, November 7th, 6-9 p.m. at the Aycock Barn
- Sugar Soiree, Wednesday, November 20th, 6-8 p.m. at the Tap Room — a Patron Party and Volunteer Appreciation Bash (by invitation only)
- Shop Small, November 30th - December 7th, with a Breakfast Kickoff on Saturday, November 30th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Cafe Aquarius, and a Holiday Pop-up Market on Thursday, December 5th, 4-7 p.m. at St. Claude Arts
- OANA Members' Holiday Party, Wednesday, December 11th, 6-8 p.m. at The Kitchen Table Cafe

Once again, we can always use more help setting up, cleaning up, and soliciting sponsorships & vendors for our events, and more participation on committees.

Congratulations to our very own Jenifer Heintz, named St. Bernard BPW's Woman of the Year!

New in the neighborhood: Quitute's Brazilian Cuisine & Bar on Judge Perez at Mehle St. — check it out!

Women Crushing Wednesday was happening at the Old Arabi Bar until 8 p.m. — members were encouraged to stop by after the meeting to support fundraising for the Nine Line Foundation, which helps severely wounded combat veterans and their families.

Nunez Community College's History Lecture Series will begin on Tuesday, September 17th at 6:30 p.m. with a presentation on "The St. Bernard Voice", the Parish's oldest business, run by our own Roy family.

Kudos to our Board Members, who volunteer at least 26 days a year serving Old Arabi.

Members were reminded to vote on Saturday, October 12th (same day as Sugar Fest), or vote early Sept. 28-Oct. 5.

Door prizes were awarded, members were thanked for attending, and once again all were reminded to encourage neighbors to get involved & to keep our tax dollars in the Parish! The meeting was adjourned at around 6:45.