

OANA General Meeting Minutes 11-16-17

The meeting, held at the Maumus Center, was called to order at 6 p.m. President Barry Lemoine's slide show again helped everyone follow the presentation of agenda items, the first of which was the Pledge of Allegiance.

Photos from OANA's signature fall events -- the 9th Annual Sugar Fest and the last two Sippin' in the Sunsets of the year -- were featured. Barry then thanked OANA Vice President Charlie Lesage for his work in bringing the neighborhood Night Out Against Crime to Arabi Food Store's newly-renovated patio. Deputy Charles Borchers addressed the gathering, our largest Night Out ever, with these words of advice: "Lock your car".

The St. Bernard Day of Service was celebrated at the Old Arabi Community Garden, where neighbors planted seeds and socialized at sunset. OANA's Troy and Alison Barrios got a shout-out for helping organize that event.

Under "What's New in Old Arabi":

- Canseco's Market is open! Finally we are not in a "food desert"! Ribbon cutting was on Tuesday the 14th. Check out this full-service grocery and fabulous deli, located in The Front in Arabi, our newly renovated shopping center.
- Also new in The Front is House of Nails, already highly recommended by several of our members. Their ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place tomorrow morning.
- On the other side of St. Claude is ACTStudios, Actors' Creative Training, where kids can learn skills for acting in film and TV.

And several upcoming events were announced:

- The OANA Members' Holiday Party will be held on Thursday, December 7th at The Kitchen Table Cafe', with delicious offerings from the restaurant and a cash bar. The Saints vs. Falcons game will be broadcast during the party. Flyers will be emailed and hand-delivered to all members. And remember, The Kitchen Table offers half-price wines, by the glass and bottle, every Thursday evening.
- Whiskey Bayou will hold their Ugly Christmas Sweater party on December 16th, 6pm-till, with guest bartenders.
- Studio Inferno is opening a new show, Monuments and Mementos, on Saturday. Remember them for your holiday shopping, too!
- Old Arabi Marketplace will host a Women's Professional Network event on Wednesday, November 29th. Yet another great place for shopping treasures in the neighborhood!

- The Planetarium in the Maumus Center has several shows coming up in December.

Sunshine Committee Chair Jenifer Heintz will be sending our condolences to a member whose father passed away.

Board member Sal Cusimano reported on the difficult process of amending our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, most importantly concerning whether and how to expand membership categories. He's talked to many current members, and the general consensus is that residents and homeowners are the backbone of our organization. But what about property owners who are not residents, and business owners? He's working on a proposal with up to five categories and voting levels, to be presented to the membership in the near future. Discussion will follow before any vote is taken -- stay tuned for further info.

A member asked if a population breakdown of resident-owners vs. renters was available; the answer is "no". Barry emphasized that we want to be fair and inclusive in our membership, and at the same time make the policy simple.

Treasurer and real-estate agent Alison Barrios then gave a detailed presentation on market trends in the neighborhood, based on MLS information. The data included single-family and multi-family active listings, sales by average price and price/square foot, and various comparisons over time. See the presentation in the link below these minutes.

One member asked if we knew the number of houses/units in our Old Arabi area; Alison did not, but can find out. Another wondered about airbnb rentals: so far there are only two registered, and Parish government is just beginning work on regulations.

Thanks were given to the presenters, and to audience members for their participation and thoughtful questions. Perhaps a future topic could be housing trend comparisons between Old Arabi and Holy Cross or Chalmette.

Lastly, members were encouraged to vote for the millage renewals (not new taxes) supporting schools on Saturday's ballot, because "it takes a millage".

A member mentioned that plans were being developed for the old Ford plant property — nothing is finalized yet.

Door prizes were awarded, Thanksgiving wishes were exchanged, and the meeting was adjourned around 6:40.

