

OANA General Meeting Minutes 05-17-2023

The May 2023 General Meeting was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order at approximately 6:12 pm. Around 45 people were in attendance. The agenda was presented on a slideshow.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the new Board of Directors and Officers were introduced. All of the Officer positions were uncontested, and there were just enough nominees to fill the Board seats, so no voting was necessary. Outgoing Officers & Board Members Susan Green, Marie Cossé, Clay Cossé and Ray Lauga were thanked, and incumbents Sal Cusimano and Shelli Gifford, along with newly elected Board Members Izzy Maistros, Deborah Lavender and Nora Lambert, were welcomed to the Board. Also new as an Officer is Vice President Gay Parvazi, who will serve alongside President Alison Barrios, Secretary Linda Van Aman, and Treasurer Troy Barrios (formerly VP). Each of the new-to-the-Board members said a word about themselves.

Guest speakers for the night were Justice of the Peace Kevin Hoffman, and Constable Merritt Landry, both serving Ward A. They briefly explained their jobs, and stressed that they often work together on issues. The JP functions as a judge, while the Constable acts as a bailiff. The JP performs marriages and conducts small court cases, while the Constable carries out subpoenas and evictions, and has the same power as the Sheriff. They collaborate on problem cases, and both serve 6-year terms.

Upcoming OANA events are the final spring Sippin' in the Sunset on Thursday, May 25th, and the Old Arabi Sugar Fest on Saturday, October 14th. Volunteers are always needed, and a signup sheet was provided. There will be an initial planning meeting for Sugar Fest at 6 pm on Wednesday, June 7th at the Barrios Real Estate Office in Arabi Plaza. Several committees are available to join, as well as volunteer shifts for the event.

The annual 2022-23 Financial Report was presented, showing an Opening Fiscal Balance (5/22) of \$18,504 in the Operating Account and \$11,117 in the Smith Culinary Scholarship Fund. Year-end Balances (5/23) were \$21,347 and \$12,120 respectively. Total fundraising in 2022, from Sippin' and Sugar Fest, was \$16,101, and YTD in 2023 was \$1228 from March Sippin'. Donations of \$8697 went to various local needs (see slideshow for a list), and \$20,402 raised by OANA went directly to Arabi tornado victims.

In news from around the neighborhood:

- Jacob Zeairs, co-owner of the Green House at 6720 St. Claude (formerly Waffle House), introduced his new business, which will be open 10-2 on Fridays & Saturdays for now, with plans to expand hours and offerings. Hours will be posted on the door, and their donation to tonight's plant swap was greatly appreciated!
- Pirogue's Whiskey Bayou has new kitchen offerings as Oscar at PWB
- Sweetwater Daiquiri Co. is open at 7301 St. Bernard Hwy, in the old Arabi Diner building
- Carlo's Brazilian Corner appears to be open in Arabi Plaza — details to come
- The Community Center of St. Bernard is sponsoring a Blood Drive on June 6th

- Old Arabi Lighthouse Records & Books regularly hosts live music & poetry events, with 3 more in May
- Arabi Visual Arts Gallery is featuring a Juried Art & Photography Exhibit, Louisiana Fish and Wildlife, in which our own Troy Barrios won second place for his redfish photo!

In news from around the Parish:

- Nunez Foundation's Pelicans & Pearls Gala, which raises scholarship funds, is on Friday
- A glass recycling hub, sponsored by the Meraux Foundation and Glass Half Full, is now operating at Docville Farm, with drop-off available M-F 9-4 except holidays. Residential pick-up is also available for a fee

Other May & June happenings in the Parish were listed.

The May Yard of the Month went to Collin & Katie Jones at 562 Lebeau. Everyone is encouraged to nominate yards for the award by emailing oldarabi@gmail.com.

A few announcements were made:

- New short term rental (STR) regulations have been submitted by Community Development, and will be discussed and voted on at the Council Meeting on June 6th at 7 pm. The current proposal may undergo changes by then, so anyone interested in the issue should attend the Council Meeting
- Old Arabi Bar (OAB) is planning to open on June 1st
- Science Camps will be taking place at the Maumus Center during June, with 2 age groups, for \$150/week
- Some crepe myrtle trees on Mehle may be removed for upcoming drainage repairs

Future meeting dates and upcoming events were listed. The next General Meeting is July 19th, and will feature guest speakers discussing storm water management & flood risk reduction. Door prizes were awarded, the meeting was adjourned around 7:15 pm, and plants were cheerfully swapped.