

## OANA General Meeting Minutes – 04/12/18

The April General Meeting, held at the Maumus Center, was called to order at 6:07 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. A slide show accompanied the presentation of agenda items.

**"What's new in Old Arabi"** first highlighted the new neighborhood utility box artwork by Sabrina Schmidt — a tribute to indigo, one of the first cash crops in our area. The work was commissioned by OANA and Visions Unlimited. New street banners along St. Claude now mark our Cultural Arts District, thanks to the Office of Tourism, the Tourist Commission and the Meraux Foundation.

Recently new in the neighborhood is Chew Rouge at Pirogue's Whiskey Bayou, featuring outdoor dining and crawfish on Friday nights. The venue offers dine in or carry out.

**Continuing the Mitchell Smith Culinary legacy**, OANA will award a "Top Chef Scholarship" of \$250 to a Chalmette HS senior who was a finalist in this year's competition at the Maumus Center. The awards ceremony is April 30th.

Our **March 15th Sippin' in the Sunset** was a huge success, with great weather, great music and a great turnout. A big shoutout of thanks goes to our amazing volunteers. We're looking forward to another great event, Sippin' With Ya Mom and Dem (Mother's Day is May 13th) on Thursday, May 10th, 6-9 p.m. at the Aycock Barn. Back by popular demand, music will be by Kenny Kerth Jass band. We still need a sponsor for the bands. Members Clay and Marie Cossé have arranged for beer kegs from the new Royal Brewery, located in nearby New Orleans East. Vendors were reportedly very happy with the March event.

**The 10th anniversary of the Sugar Festival** is coming up this year, on Saturday, October 13th. Anyone interested in helping make it even sweeter is encouraged to sign up for the Sugar Fest committee with Ray Lauga (reply through this website or email us at [oldarabi@gmail.com](mailto:oldarabi@gmail.com)).

The main agenda item was then addressed, namely **a review of the organization's current Bylaws and explanation of the Board's proposed changes**, to be voted on at the May 24th General Meeting. Two copies — one salmon (old) and one white (revised) — were handed out. Changes and rationale were as follows:

- The Bylaws from which we have been working are from 1999. After Katrina, OANA was dormant for several years. As a result, our 501c-3 status was jeopardized, and we were advised to get into good standing first before making any changes.

- The current bylaws are somewhat vague and outdated, and our aim in making these changes is to be reflective of what OANA has been doing since we reorganized several years ago.
- Some changes were simply cosmetic or grammatical, and the Bylaws were converted into a digital format for easier navigation.
- **Membership (Article III):** The biggest change regarding membership is that ANYONE can be a member of OANA if they support the mission of the association BUT voting privileges are limited to those who reside in Old Arabi.
- We encourage all business and property owners in the area to join OANA, but the logistics of confirming who owns property, how many properties, how many businesses are operating out of one building, who votes, the owner or the renter, and enforcing so many different scenarios would be very difficult to manage.
- Under the proposed changes, there will still be two classes of membership: ACTIVE VOTING MEMBERS — those who live in Old Arabi, and ASSOCIATE NON-VOTING MEMBERS — any person, business, or corporation who wants to attend the meetings and social gatherings of OANA.
- The Senior Citizen Membership was deleted since our dues are currently only \$20, as opposed to \$100 in 1999.
- Meeting dates were changed to every other month — Jan, March, May, July, September, October, and November — **Odd months for OANA**. The specific date (third Thursday) was omitted to provide flexibility.
- There are now two socials: Night Out Against Crime in October and Holiday/Christmas in December. The August social was deleted since we have two Sippin' events and Sugar Fest in the fall.
- **Governing Body (Article IV):** All is the same except the requirement to have a specific number of Board members from certain streets.
- **Duties & Rights (Article VI):** Officers and Board Members elected in May assume a two year term.
- **Election of Officers (Article VII):** Elections will take place every two years. Eligibility to hold office is limited to ACTIVE members.
- **Article X:** Since email and website provide current information, the newsletter has been omitted.
- **Amendment of Bylaws (Article XI):** Bylaws should be difficult to change, so no changes were made in this section.

The proposed changes meet all the requirements. We will need a 2/3 vote of all members present on Thursday, May 24, to ratify. The Bylaws are always a work in progress, but the revised edition will give us a modern, digitalized document to work with for any further changes to be considered.

Attendees were thanked for their feedback, questions and suggestions submitted through our email requests.

On **Speeding & Safety**, OANA member Judyth Weir requested a speed indicator sign for Friscoville from the Sheriff's office 5 weeks ago. There are four indicators in the Parish. One is permanently placed on Palmisano during baseball season, but another should come available soon. There is currently one operating on Lebeau. Neighbors should continue to call and write the Sheriff's Department and our councilperson, Gillis McCloskey, about speeding concerns.

Several items from OANA member Emily Slazer's car were stolen recently. She wants to remind everyone to LOCK YOUR VEHICLES.

**Other ideas:** A signpost indicating various landmarks could be placed in a visible location for visitors. Artist Mark Abshire has offered to create something in aluminum.

A design has been proposed for a postcard map promoting neighborhood businesses. An initial run could be partially funded by OANA, then by interested businesses themselves in future years. The flip side could eventually feature places to stay. A review of licensed short-term rentals shows just three locations registered in 2017 and two so far in 2018. The Parish is reportedly working on this issue.

Committee chairs were thanked, and the list showed a vacancy in the Membership Committee seat, formerly held by VP Charlie Lesage, who has moved out of the area. Maegan Dobson has agreed fill the Vice President slot "for a while"; membership is up for grabs.

Door prizes were awarded. Yard flags were handed out to all member households present, and stakes were sold for \$5 each.

Thanks were given to all who attended, and to Gena Asevedo for hosting us. Everyone was reminded of the May events — Sippin' on May 10th and General Meeting on May 24th — and encouraged to support local businesses. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.