

OANA General Meeting Minutes 03-15-2023

The March 2023 General Meeting was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order at approximately 6:10 pm. Around 40 people were in attendance. The agenda was presented on a slideshow.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, guest speaker Jamie Richardson, Executive Director of the Community Center of St. Bernard gave a recap of the Center's accomplishments over the past year. These included:

- 1256 families served, three times more than the year before; partnerships with other organizations help keep up with rising expenses
- the backpack program, helping 250 students
- fundraising efforts, totaling \$340,000
- successfully taking over of the Blues Brews & BBQ Festival, another great fundraiser
- becoming the new host site for Girls on the Run NOLA, a 5K run & confidence-building training

The Center is also forming a charity team to participate in the Crescent City Classic on April 8th. Once again it will be the only charity-designated team in St. Bernard. Information on joining, donating or volunteering was provided.

OANA President Alison Barrios, who also chairs the Community Center's board, praised Jamie for all that she's accomplished as director, attracting new things to St. Bernard, always with a focus on community.

A collage of photos from the Lundi Gras 2023 event, another fun time hosted by OANA and St. Claude Heights, were shown. Kudos went out to Rene at Zeitgeist & Arabi Arts Park for the host venue, Pirogue's Whiskey Bayou for their bar stop, Chris Ryan at St. Claude Arts Studio for free photos, and Lynda at Old Arabi Marketplace for free Long Island Iced Tea (wheel!).

Upcoming in March is the first of the Sippin' in the Sunset Spring Series, on Thursday the 30th, with music by Kenny Kerth Jass. As always, volunteers are needed, and we are looking to set up a "festivals committee" to help organize our events. A second Sippin' is scheduled for May 25th.

Board Member Ray Lauga made a brief presentation outlining possible ideas for increased neighborhood security. A fund could be set up with money from a millage — approved by the Parish Council and OANA — to pay for security cameras (doorbell and/or street mounted) initially, Future uses could be free neighborhood internet and beautification projects. A show of hands indicated interest; Ray will chair a committee to discuss possibilities; a Google survey may be forthcoming to assess interest in various projects and how to move forward.

Board Elections will be held at the next General Meeting, May 17th. The positions and rules for nominating, running & voting were reviewed, along with the duties of Officers and Board Members. Active members must pay dues by April 30th to participate.

Nomination slips were available at this meeting, and anyone interested in seeing the Board in action was invited to the April 6th Meeting.

Neighborhood Happenings

- Carlos Brazilian Corner, the new Brazilian restaurant in Arabi Plaza is getting close to opening
- The Community Center is hosting a Chamber After 5 event on March 23rd
- [ART]CONSCIOUS is hosting an art market at the Arts Park on March 18th
- Watch for Plants for the People, weekly plant giveaways from the Meraux Foundation, posted on Facebook and staged on the side of the Community Center

Members' News & Notables — Congratulations

- to Katherine Lemoine, who was elected Vice-President of the statewide Louisiana School Board Association
- to Kerri Callais, who recently launched her campaign for St. Bernard Parish President
- to OANA members who participated in the first in-house pickleball tournament at Val Riess Gym. Ronnie Evans and Sal & Patrice Cusimano helped organize, Susan Green kept score, Kim Janneck & Sydney Nunez cheered the players on, and special congrats go to Kathy Hall and Marie Cosse', who won gold medals at the tournament

Announcements & Introductions

- Nunez Community College is hosting "Something Wednesdays" through April 5th, a series of free classes presented by the Voices Foundation and funded by the Meraux Foundation.
- A list of dates to save for OANA events was shared
- Chris Ryan will be hosting a Louisiana Arts Fest at the St. Claude Arts Studio beginning May 13th
- Patrice Cusimano, running for a Parish Council seat, will hold a campaign kickoff event on April 13th at the Swim Club

Door prizes were awarded, including one free year of OANA membership, attendees were reminded of the next Board Meeting on April 6th, and the next General Meeting on May 17th, which will feature Elections, guest speakers Constable Merritt Landry and Justice of the Peace Kevin Hoffman, and a plant swap. The meeting was adjourned around 7:25 pm.