

OANA General Meeting Minutes 05-18-2022

The May General Meeting was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order just after 6:15 p.m. More than 40 people were in attendance to follow the agenda as presented on a slideshow.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the Annual Financial Report. Fiscal Year End Balances for 2021 and 2022 showed an increase in the Culinary Scholarship Fund, thanks to Debbie Smith's yearly \$1000 donation, and a decrease in the operating account of around \$4000. Extra expenses were incurred this year from having to replace old equipment and supplies, such as coolers, tables, tablecloths, and signs, and to replenish our stock of beverages for Sippin'. Our main fundraisers, Sippin' and Sugarfest, didn't happen for several seasons due to Covid. We did receive much-appreciated annual donations from Domino's even with no Sugarfest.

An update of donations to OANA for tornado recovery showed direct financial contributions of over \$18,000, gift cards with a value of \$2130, cleaning supplies, and enough meals to feed several armies. The gift cards and most supplies were distributed directly to affected residents — a few leftover items were available to attendees at this meeting. The cash collected will be distributed in \$500 amounts to 37 of our most affected neighbors in Old Arabi and across the way. A list of "thank yous" to the many generous donors filled two slides. OANA is no longer accepting donations, Anyone with ongoing recovery needs is urged to utilize the Community Center, where plentiful donated supplies are available to any Arabi resident who needs them. Parish Government has a list of resources on their website. Further offers to donate should be directed to those agencies; God's Closet at the First Baptist Church will accept clothing.

Our Guest Speaker this evening was Louis Pomes, Road Yard Chief of Operations for the Parish. He began with statistics on the recent tornado damage: 41 homes destroyed, 96 with major damage, and 126 with minor damage. Several insurance companies have gone bankrupt. The Parish is still offering free demolition & debris removal, but the service will be ending in 3-4 weeks. Residents and property owners should get all debris out to the street, to be picked up during final sweeps of the area. Pomes applauded the amazing response from Arabi residents, and from other individuals and businesses who brought in volunteers and equipment to help with cleanup. Entergy also did a great job rebuilding their network and getting power restored quickly. Property owners were advised to hire their own structural engineer to evaluate damage, especially if insurers are being slow to respond.

Pomes then gave a brief update on the drainage projects underway in our neighborhood. Phase 1 is the current construction on St. Claude, expected to wrap up in 6-7 weeks, while Phase 2 will involve the other side of St. Claude. Phase 3 is still in the planning stage. Any new construction in the area will be responsible for managing their own runoff. Arabi has all new water lines, and pressure can be increased as new developments are built.

In OANA news, Sippin' in the Sunset is coming up on May 26th, with music by George

Ricks and Tongue & Groove, and planning for the October 8th Sugarfest has already begun. Volunteers are always needed for these events; anyone interested in helping out is invited to speak with a board member or email oldarabi@gmail.com.

Member news and notables:

- Congratulations to Marie Cossé, who participated in the Senior Olympics and won 2 gold and 2 bronze medals; and Mary Nadler, who has completed her chemo!
- Condolences go out to John Sikorski, who tragically lost his wife and a wonderful neighbor, Jacquie Cupolo.

Community happenings:

- The final Patio Market at The Kitchen Table Café on 5/21
- A 70's Dance Party at Old Arabi Bar on 6/18
- Extremities, an Exhibition of Hands & Feet, opening reception on 5/21 at Arabi Visual Arts in the St. Claude Arts Building
- Nunez Community College fundraiser Pelicans & Pearls, also on 5/21
- A Preakness Party at OAB, again on 5/21

A slide with the 2022 Calendar of Events came next, and a list of committees followed. OANA always encourages members to get more involved in these activities.

Door prizes were awarded. Attendees were thanked for coming, and reminded that the next meeting will be held on July 20th, featuring an Arabi/St. Bernard Real Estate Report. The meeting was adjourned at around 7:00, and a lively plant swap ensued.