

OANA General Meeting Minutes 11-17-2021

The first General Meeting since July was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order at 6:10 p.m. Around 35 people were welcomed by President Alison Barrios.

An update on the three Fall Sippin' in the Sunsets reported that the events were well-attended and valuable as a return to neighborhood activities. After several large purchases of equipment and supplies, we broke even financially. Domino's renewed their support with a substantial donation.

Membership is up to 79 households with 133 members, plus 20 associate members. The newest members to join were welcomed at this meeting. A member survey, asking for feedback to help the Board set priorities for 2022, was recently emailed to all current members, and paper copies were made available. Members were encouraged to fill out the questionnaire by November 30th; a reminder emailing will be sent soon.

The evening's guest speaker, Councilman Gillis McCloskey, began by thanking the OANA for helping the community come back after months of COVID restrictions and Hurricane Ida recovery. He then gave an update on the progress of Phase II of the Old Arabi Revitalization Plan. Part 1 involves improvements along the river, with sidewalks, street work and landscaping, and Part 2 will take place on St. Claude, adding a bus stop shelter by St. Claude Arts, a parking lot behind Zeitgeist Theatre & Lounge, and landscaping in front of Canseco's. See the plan here: <https://sbpg.net/DocumentCenter/View/78/2016-Old-Arabi-Revitalization-Plan-PDF?bidId=>

McCloskey also spoke about drainage projects that have been planned for years and will finally be underway soon, with funding help from the CARES Act. Several broken pipes designed to remove floodwaters will be repaired or replaced with larger conduits. Timelines are as yet unknown, but the Parish plans to move as quickly as possible. The roadwork currently being done on Mehle Street is behind schedule, but should be completed soon.

In Community Development, McCloskey reported that a new tax incentive for digital media development in the Parish is already attracting business interest to our area. Read the article here: <https://www.sbedf.org/news/st-bernard-parish-council-approves-sbedf-led-digital-media-amp-software-incentive-program>

The digging on Esteban is privately-owned property being prepared for housing development. A member wondered if the excavation might be of archeological interest, since it was part of the old stockyard.

Audience members asked what could be done about speeding on Friscoville and other streets, especially a problem with traffic from Domino's at shift change times. A suggestion that a separate committee of interested OANA members could partner with Domino's to find on a solution. Also from the audience, a suggestion that sniffer device be installed on fire trucks to better monitor air quality in our area.

Dates for 2022 events were announced:

- Membership meetings are the third Wednesday of odd-numbered months.
- The Lundi Gras Marching Parade will return on Feb. 28th, and Sugar Fest will be back on Oct. 8th.
- Four Sippin' in the Sunset Thursdays are set for March 31st, May 26th, Sept. 15th and Nov. 10th.

The Nadler family appreciates any support as 9-year-old Mary fights a rare form of cancer. A kickball fundraiser is being held on December 11th. OANA has donated \$500 plus tips from the October 14th Sippin'. Contact us if you wish to help.

The December Yard-of-the-Month will be awarded on December 5th and will be a holiday decorating contest.

The annual OANA Members' Holiday Party will be held on Wednesday, December 8th, 6-9 p.m., at the Zeitgeist Theatre & Lounge.

The Halloween Trick-or-Treat map was again very successful; we'll continue to look for more ways to promote it, as some members said neighbors hadn't heard about it.

The Little Free Library has been installed by the Old Jail, with a bench located nearby. A dedication ceremony will be held sometime in the future. A project to repurpose old newspaper machines into more little libraries is also being considered.

The Swan River Yoga Studio on St. Claude now offers a \$20 monthly membership, or single classes with a donation, and was highly recommended by Alison.

The Old Arabi Marketplace will host its holiday party on December 9th at 5 p.m.

Door prizes — gift certificates donated by Missy Showalter Photography and Old Arabi Marketplace — were awarded.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m. The next General Meeting will be January 19th, 2022, at the Maumus Center. Dues are payable as of January 1st, 2022, and can be paid in person, by mail, or via PayPal on the website here: <https://www.olderabi.org/membership>