

OANA General Meeting Minutes 01-19-2022

The first General Meeting of the new year was held at the Maumus Center, 721 Friscoville Ave., and was called to order at 6:12 p.m. Around 60 people attended, many renewing their memberships, and a few just joining. The meeting was recorded and accompanied by a slideshow, which opened with the agenda, a welcome from President Alison Barrios, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first order of business was an overview of OANA's two Membership Categories and dues, and a list of OANA committees. Anyone interested in helping out can contact us at oldarabi@gmail.com. For membership info go to oldarabi.org.

A review of the past year followed. After many COVID cancellations, we managed to sponsor our first, very successful, Sippin' in the Sunset in May, and three more as a Fall Concert Series. The music lineup featured fan favorites Kenny Kerth Jass and Cyprus Pop Trio, and very well-received newcomer Cameron Dupuy & the Cajun Troubadours. Great food and craft vendors contributed to the festivities. Many thanks went out to our OANA volunteers, bar patrons, Board and Sippin' committee, as well as to Domino's Sugar for their generous donation & participation, and to other supporters, including Ditto's Printing, OAB, Clements Insurance, and photographer Christy Cusimano.

Also in 2021, we were able to get back to in-person meetings, organize another successful Halloween Trick-or-Treat map, survive Hurricane Ida together, and host a fabulous holiday party at Zeitgeist Theatre, with music by Christian Serpas.

OANA gave back to the community in 2021. Despite not being able to hold Sugarfest for the second year in a row, we made our annual holiday gift of \$5000 for Arabi Elementary families. We donated nearly \$1000, and members gave many pints of blood, to benefit Mary Nadler and her family. A \$300 donation was also made to the Swan River Yoga Studio Arabi.

The evening's first guest speaker was Laura Johanna, co-director of Swan River Yoga Studio Arabi, which has been open for eleven years. All classes are free or by donation, so there is never a charge for any of the various activities, which include yoga, meditation, philosophical study, and retreats. Two levels of sustaining membership, at \$20 and \$40 monthly, make this possible. Laura invited everyone to come by for a visit or a class. More info at swanriveryogaarabi.com.

The second guest speaker was Jason Stopa, Director of Community Development for St. Bernard Parish. He explained the role of the Old Arabi Neighborhood Commission in regulating exterior aesthetic issues in the Old Arabi Historic District. The 7-member Commission issues certificates of appropriateness (COAs) and enforces codes regarding changes that are visible from any street frontage. Jason explained the application process and criteria for obtaining a COA, and listed resources for property owners (see slide show).

A Q&A segment followed, and several attendees asked about land in Old Arabi that will

be developed. One parcel, between Aycock and Hernandez, will reportedly be apartments. Though no plans have yet been presented to the Parish, the developers intend to build the maximum number of units allowable. Questions about whether the current infrastructure (drainage, traffic, etc.) will support such heavy use were raised; Jason said those issues must be addressed in the developers' plans. OANA would like for all developers in our neighborhood to come talk with us. Another concern regarded residences that are being sold as having more units than allowed. On questions of short term rentals (STRs), the Parish is not issuing any more licenses until the Council decides on specific regulations.

In a last call for member surveys, members who have not yet submitted their ideas will receive the survey again, to be completed by January 28th. Answers will help OANA plan future meetings & events.

A 2022 Calendar of Events was presented, with dates set for General Meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of odd months, 2 Spring and 2 Fall Sippin' in the Sunsets, and Sugarfest on October 8th.

A new feature, "Member News & Notables", was introduced, with members encouraged to submit items via email. For this time: ongoing blood drives for Mary Nadler will be announced periodically; thoughts and prayers to Sam Catalanotto who is recovering from COVID; and congratulations to Troy Barrios for having photos featured in a United Way publication.

Names were drawn for door prizes from Paris Nails and Soulé2Geaux, attendees were thanked for coming and reminded to join or renew before leaving. The meeting was adjourned around 7:15 p.m. The next General Meeting will be on March 16th.