



Wards Corner Civic League

Crossroads

**Serving: Colony Point, Hariton Gardens,
Merridale, Pinehurst, Restmere, Rose Gardens,
Sussex of Norfolk, Virginia Gardens and Wexford**

March, 2010

Web site www.Wardscorner.com

CIVIC LEAGUE MEETING MONDAY

**March 15, 2010
6:45 PM**

NORFOLK FITNESS and WELLNESS CENTER

Agenda

**Virginia General Assembly
Delegation Invited
Delegates Miller and Alexander
Senator Northam**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Jim English ajim.english@gmail.com

Dear Neighbors,

Is the tide changing for Wards Corner? Are we finally starting to get the needed attention from City Hall and City Council? To begin, let me share with you the below quote taken from Mayor Paul Fraim's State of the City Address given in early February of this year.

"More than \$13 million has been invested in the Greater Wards Corner area since approval of the Comprehensive Plan. Last year, police presence and code enforcement activities were stepped up, surveillance cameras installed in Denby Park, and a neighborhood watch begun with 60 residents participating. As a result, violent crime in Wards Corner dropped 35% and property crime 6%.

Three residential rehabilitation programs were begun for Denby Park, Oakdale Farms and Monticello Village to assist residents in upgrading their homes. The programs were so successful that within six months, the first \$1 million was committed to 21 homeowners. Another \$1 million was committed this fiscal year to assist 40 homeowners, and there's already a waiting list for next year.

On the commercial side, the department of development is in active discussions with major

property owners in the heart of the Wards Corner business district, and we expect new development opportunities to be identified later this year."

While we could argue the points mentioned as a part of the over-all funding to neighborhoods city wide, nonetheless, this year's address marked the first time that Wards Corner was mentioned in several paragraphs and not just in a fleeting sentence in the Mayor's speech. That's progress. While I know we have always been on the radar screen (although even though it may only have been a small blip), maybe this is indicative of a turning point for Wards Corner.

Secondly, Mayor Fraim has now opened his campaign headquarters in our Civic League area at the corner of Maycox Ave. and Granby Street (in the old cleaners store). I may be wrong, but I don't ever remember a time when any person running for elected office located their headquarters in the Wards Corner area, at least not those running for city council. Is this a sign of a changing attitude toward Wards Corner? Or is this only a political move to get our vote? I want to believe it represents a changing view of the importance of Wards Corner as a gateway to Downtown. Our area represents a strong, solid and important voting block in city elections. In addition to this, Mayor Fraim will hold his kickoff campaign reelection party at the Hellenic Center In Wards Corner. Is this yet another indication of our importance??

Third, we have four candidates running for election to fill the council seat in Ward 1, our area. Three of those candidates have mentioned that Wards Corner is a priority for them and one even lives in our Greater Wards Corner area. Are they running on the Wards Corner issue to get our vote or are they sincere? I don't know about two of them, but I know and believe one of them. Andy Protogyrou has mentioned that he wants to be an advocate and champion for Wards Corner. I believe him and I have endorsed him as the best candidate for Ward 1 and Wards Corner. I usually don't endorse candidates, but I am doing so this year for this election because it is so important for our area.

Fourth, There is talk and speculation that the Southeast corner of the Business District, collectively known as the Perry Property, is gearing up for a major makeover soon. I believe this is more than speculation since AJ Gators is in the process of getting approval to move into the site formerly housed by WhereHouse

Music. This represents a major investment to them. Why would they spend an enormous amount of money on the property renovating the premises if more redevelopment was not on the way? Also, Langley Federal Credit Union plans to open its new Wards Corner branch at the corner of Granby Street and Louisiana Drive by the end of March. Of the six full time employees projected to staff the branch, five of those will be new hires, according to LFCU spokesperson Susan Thrash. "We have been looking for a good location in Norfolk and we took advantage of this opportunity. This location will serve current members, and help us grow on the Southside," said Thrash. LFCU was established in 1936 and has more than 175,000 members and \$1.5 billion in assets. The renovation project designer is Guernsey & Tingle Architects, with Glenn Development serving as contractor. The property transaction was brokered by Harvey Lindsey Commercial Real Estate of Norfolk. These both have the potential of being a very good thing for the business district and all of the surrounding area.

Fifth, a new Assistant City Manager has been assigned to the Wards Corner Task Force. Mr. Stein is the senior assistant city manager and has been with the city of Norfolk for over 35 years. He knows the ins and outs of all aspects of city government and should and could be a real asset to the Wards Corner Task Force as we reconsider our priorities for short and long term action consistent with the 2004 Wards Corner Comprehensive Plan. Our primary focus is on the Business District, Denby Park and Titustown areas immediately over the next couple of years. We do hope that the Task Force can establish our priorities, communicate them effectively to the city council and staff and then move forward with a renewed plan.

Many of us have been working for 10+ years on this revitalization effort with your help. I remain cautiously optimistic that given the flurry of seemingly renewed interest in Wards Corner as expressed above, we will make better strides forward in the near future. Of course the more voices we have in this effort the easier it is to sell our position to City Council. Please join us in this effort by contacting any of the Wards Corner Civic League officers and getting involved. Our names and numbers are posted in this newsletter.

Thanks and hope to see you at our next meeting.

Sincerely,



NEWS AND NOTES

Keep Norfolk Beautiful Day

As part of the Great American Cleanup, your help is needed to pick up litter on Saturday, March 27, at 8:00 AM. Please check in at the mail-box on the corner of Ruthven and Grantham at the traffic light – W. Little Creek Road and Ruthven. For more information, please call Ray Duron at 423-4337

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For those delivering the newsletter: Please let Sue Classick know if you are going out of town and won't be able to deliver the newsletter for a particular month. Just leave a message on her answering machine, 489-2315

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The Norfolk Federation of Civic Leagues invites you to attend their first citywide Candidates Forum on April 8, 2010, at Granby High School Auditorium. Doors are open at 6:30 PM, and the Forum will begin at 7 and conclude at 9:30 PM. Questions can be submitted in advance by e-mail: nfclicandidatesforum@gmail or at the door.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning Balance			\$2146.79
+ funds received	\$155.00		
-funds disbursed		\$82.95	
Ending Balance			\$2218.84

WCCL Membership

Membership in your civic league is a bargain for \$5.00 (\$10/two household members). Send your check to Ray Duron at 530 Sterling Street, 23505. Our dues' year runs from January 1 through December 31.

If you are a continuing member, it's time to think of renewing for 2010. If you haven't joined yet, please consider doing so now.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and e-mail:

WARDS CORNER CIVIC LEAGUE MINUTES

Wards Comer Civic League met on Monday, Feb.22, 2010 in NFWCenter at 6:45PM. Pres. Jim English led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed guests, Chuck Brewer and Barbara Saunders, both seeking election for Ward 1. Jim reported that Officer Jackson is recuperating from a previous illness, thus no crime report.

Martin Thomas, Jr stated that the Web site, wardscorner.com is useful in contacting members by Email with the online newsletter and other important news ... such as the closing of the intersection of North Shore Rd and Newport Ave for repairs. He asked that to be included, we give an Email address. Pres. Jim reported the difficulty the Taskforce is having in obtaining 14 cement planters for the business district (maintenance agreements, right of way, watering, etc.). He also gave an updated report on AJGators Restaurant moving into Warehouse Music Building. Walgreen Drug Stores are seeking ABC licensing to sell alcohol. Our civic league had been against the sales in RiteAid/Eckerds years ago. Many want the same agreement as then. Mayor Paul Fraim, elected 4 years ago, was guest speaker. He has been overly busy with the City affairs, such as numerous meetings with City, State, Federal, military, business, ODU, NSU, mental health, homeless organizations and others. He seeks to grow the economy and desires consensus with these diverse groups. The Mayor stated that Wards Comer (area from Hampton Blvd. to Tidewater Dr.) has received \$13 million for this Fitness Center, Titustown, Denby Park/Oakdale Farm, (home owner rehab program), road paving, esthetics (crosswalks, medians). The Perry property (Dollar Tree, 15 Barbers site) is working to redevelop, hopefully before summer, but the economy is tough. Questions posed concerned light rail, high speed train, Norfolk Public Schools, elected school board, Texas Streets, and Wards Comer shopping and revitalization, our neglect and frustration with Council. One member asked "how can we help you?" The answer was to have civic league involvement in keeping Council aware of problems. The Mayor was thanked for obtaining the flags in front of Granby High School 3 years ago ... he gave a campaign promise that Wards Comer can have the 14 planters.

Pres. English said that March 15 agenda scheduled our General Assembly officers, while April 19 will host the Ward 1 candidates. A resident is concerned about area students being sent to Lafayette Winona rather than Blair Jr High and asked for our support to reverse this redistribution.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM.
Respectfully submitted, Joan Griffey, Secretary

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police Non-Emergency	441-5610
Pace Officer	831-3484
Police Red Sector	664-6914
Code Enforcement	664-6532
Environmental Health	683-2712
Sewer Backup	823-1000
Waste Management (Call here for large pickups)	441-5813
Norfolk Cares Call Center (Don't know what office to call on the problem?)	664-6510
Police Emergency	911

WCCL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Jim English	423-7154
1 st VP/ Membership	Martin Thomas, Jr.	618-6468
2 nd VP/ Newsletter Distribution	Sue Classick	489-2315
Secretary	Joan Griffey	440-9508
Treasurer	Ray Duron	423-4337

Web Master – Martin Thomas, Jr. (618-6468)
Newsletter ideas/comments-Barbara Ross
(Bookworms@WHRO.Net or 489-1024)

Monthly Home Maintenance

Are you looking for some activities to keep you busy on the weekends? Here are a few projects that will get your house in shape for summer weather. (it's really going to be here soon!)

-Repair window screens and check screening on porches before bug season arrives. (Save old screening for future patches.)

-Build or repair fences and arbors so they'll be ready for planting season.

-Repair deck board as needed; remove protruding nails and replace with coated or galvanized screws. Be sure to check and tighten bolts in deck supports.

-Clean and seal wood deck as necessary. Deck stains with at least some pigment last longer than clear sealers; more info: www.cabotstain.com, www.flood.com, www.olympic.com.

From Virginian-Pilot Homes-February 23, 2010