

# **Downtown Norfolk Civic League**

## **November 21, 2011**

### Mission Statement:

To be a collective voice of the residents, dedicated to the quality of life issues unique to Downtown Norfolk.

### I. Welcome

### II. Introductions

### III. Financial Report – Peter Forte

- The secretary reported a balance of \$1,377.86 with 100 memberships (57 residents and 43 businesses).

### IV. P.A.C.E. Report – Officer Charlie Ball and Lt. Squires

- No violent crimes in October.
- One commercial burglary.
- One stolen car.
- Seven larcenies from autos (license plates mostly).
- One rape reported ... the two involved knew each other and this was in a room at the Crowne Plaza. A sexual assault charge was not prosecuted.
- All crime statistics in downtown are trending down.
- The GIP was a success ... all garages exceeded numbers from the previous years. Light rail ridership was estimated at 10-20K. No complaint mails, no issues or injuries. Follow-up meetings are scheduled. Not closing Brambleton Ave. was a benefit. Open parking lots at Harrison Opera House and Cedar Grove, plus the Netbus service there helped. The DNC provided some entertainment beforehand. Six to eight cars were trapped on Granby Street.

### V. Economic Development – Chuck Rigney (Acting Director)

- The Wonder Bar is open next to Havana's on Granby St.
- Plaza Alteca opened last week.
- 161 Granby St. (the leaning tower) is still under contract to US Development. US Dev is going through VHDA and the process is very protracted. They hope to have approval by year end. US Dev has attempted to obtain local 'bridge' financing.
- The Union Mission building is being financed through HUD and that has been difficult. The code violation initiative for structural and safety items has been an issue.
- Relocation of the admin, design and prop departments for the Governor's Magnet School to the Monroe Building is pending renovation. The building is next to AJ Gators, between the old Harry's BBQ and Gators. A \$6.2M renovation cost is

expected, with historic tax credits used for the exterior. The Magnet School will move into a completely renovated building by 2014.

- The Wells Theater is privately owned and the city has a 46 year lease there.
- A 7/11 location is looking to open at the Wells Fargo Center.
- Earth Fare (a regional grocer) is described as a larger Trader Joe's, and needs to have multiple locations in an area to make distribution costs reasonable.
- Farm Fresh wants to retire the rent on the Marketplace location ... there are 17 years left on the lease. The footprint is a 27,000 SF space ... 15K could be a Trader Joe's or Fresh Market (or other candidate's) space.
- Urban Outfitters is still in the works.

#### VI. Guest Speaker – various.

- The Freedom Half Marathon has received good feedback from runners.
- The de-briefing with police noted some improvements.
- There will be no overlap between distance events next year.
- 1400 runners participated and this is a good revenue stream.
- There were 193 officers on the police roster for the GIP with 30 in reserve.
- Plan Norfolk 2030 was attended by Kevin Murphy ... citizens can leave comments on the associated webpage.

#### VII. Old Business

- The city is soliciting new Cannonball Marker locations.
- The USPS is consolidating ... the downtown Atlantic St. office may be closed. This location contains many PO boxes used by businesses as well as the DNCL.
- The next meeting will be the holiday party on 12/19 at Three Way Café. There will be a similar (from last year) food spread and cash bar. Members are encouraged to bring friends. The mayor will speak at the party.
- Membership ... Len Wright is working on a member loyalty program with local businesses.
- Greg Reck is working on a blog site for condo associations.

#### VIII. New Business

- 2012 priorities will be presented at the holiday party ... suggestions and objectives are solicited.
- Nominations for officers will be taken at the holiday party and votes will be cast at the January meeting.
- Dues expire on 12/31 ... Peter Forte will be taking renewals at the holiday party.
- Join us on Facebook.

#### IX. Open Discussion

- N/A

#### X. Adjourn