

# Ocean Park Civic League NEWSLETTER

Volume II, #3

Virginia Beach, Virginia

May, 1998

## NEXT CIVIC LEAGUE MEETING

TIME: 7:30 p.m.  
DATE: Thursday, May 7, 1998  
PLACE: Ocean Park Fire and Rescue Station  
Stratford Road at Shore Drive

### Meeting Agenda

#### Previous Agenda Items

1. O&R Development Status: Approved by the Civic League - approved by Virginia Beach Planning Commission on March 11, and scheduled for review and approval by City of Virginia Beach City Council on April 28. This development will include 49 single family homes ranging from 1400 sqft. to 2300 sqft. in size and priced from \$140,000 to \$199,000, on the property known as Three Ships Inn.

2. Ocean Park Civic League: Approved a motion to determine if the citizens of Ocean Park are interested in changing the zoning of Ocean Park from R-5R (allows single-family homes and duplexes) to R-5S (allows only single-family homes).

During the past year, Ocean Park has experienced substantial growth in the form of large, three-story duplexes, over the objections of adjacent property owners and the Civic League. Variances have easily been obtained by builders who go before the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), to construct large duplexes on small lots despite objections posed by property owners and the Civic League. If this type of growth continues unabated, our community will become crowded with densely packed housing and the related problems of parking and traffic. At the March 1998 Civic League meeting, a committee was formed to investigate the issue, and develop a petition that would be circulated to Ocean Park property owners.

3. Broyles Construction Company: Will be purchasing the property located on the corner of Shore Drive and East Stratford, across from Jimmy's Pizza and Sub Shop (on the south side) for their main office. They will be renovating the building to accommodate their offices, a display center, and materials. They have asked the civic league's support in a zoning change at the rear of the building for parking purposes only. The civic league has given Mr. Broyles tentative approval, providing he includes legal documentation to the City and Ocean Park that the rear property zoning change will be approved for parking only.

4. Ocean Park Civic League: Voted to donate \$500 to Mrs. Bonnie Kettner for her appeal of a variance approved by the BZA. She has hired an attorney to appeal the ruling. The appeal is pending.

#### New Business

1. Officers: The Nominating Committee (Jerome W. Nelinson, Jackie Longworth, Derek Allen and Scott Ayers) presented the following candidates for 1998-1999 civic league officers:

President -- Jim McElligott  
Vice President -- Derek Allen  
Secretary -- Shyrlee Hurwitz  
Treasurer -- Betty Wood

The report was submitted on February 7th for presentation at the March meeting. This committee also recommended at the May meeting nominations from the floor for additional candidates by civic league members present be received.

2. Zoning: Report of the petition committee (Charles Ballou, Mark Johnson and Derek Allen) on changing Ocean Park zoning from R-5R to R-5S will be called for.

3. Bay Clean-Up Day: Information about Ocean Park Clean-Up Day, with a focus on both sides of Dinwiddie Street from Bayfront to Shore Drive, will be given by Jerry Nelinson.

## CLEAN THE BAY DAY

"Clean the Bay Day" is June 13, 1998. Please mark this date on your calendar. Volunteers are needed! This is a great opportunity for families to introduce or re-emphasize to their children the importance of taking care of our environment.

What a wonderful opportunity for children to see by example their parents and other members of the community pitching in to clean the beach. We will be meeting at the beach at the Albemarle Street Access at 9:00 a.m. Please join us.

## ALSO PLANNED FOR DISCUSSION (No Priorities Intended)

Clean the Bay Day  
Expansion of the Newsletter  
Continuation of Clean-Up Day(s) for Areas of Ocean Park  
Crime Watch Program  
Are evening meetings best for the Civic League, or would Saturday mornings be preferable?  
Expanding Membership of the Civic League  
Youth Program: Inviting Young People to Attend Meetings

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

When City Council approved sand replenishment for the Ocean Park Beach two years ago, there were two members who opposed it: Robert Dean, who is no longer on the Council, and Nancy K. Parker, who is running for re-election on Tuesday, May 5th.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### AN INFORMED ELECTORATE

As you read this newsletter, local elections will be upon us! On Tuesday, May 5, we will be electing 9 members for both the City Council and the School Board.

Louis Jones, who has been such a supportive member of issues affecting our Ocean Park community, is running unopposed for the Bayside District seat. Robert Hagans, who has so ably represented Bayside on the School Board, is not seeking re-election. There are 2 gentlemen running for that seat: Dan R. Lowe and Al Wallace. Since I have been actively working in this race, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these candidates (or any candidate in the other contests) with anyone who wishes to call me.

The important thing is to become informed and then go to the poles on May 5th. I have heard predictions of as low as 23% turn-out of voters for this election. Such apathy leads to a small minority making decisions that affect the majority. That is not the way a democracy works!! Remember, all registered voters vote in all races, regardless of where in Virginia Beach they live.

Judy Connors

### DON'T REZONE OCEAN PARK

The issue of down-zoning Ocean Park has come in response to the issuance of numerous building variances, in spite of civic league opposition, by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). It is the opinion of many in the community that the BZA is ignoring Ocean Park's opposition to the variances being requested. Since the members of the BZA are not elected officials, there is no real accountability to the community for their "rubber stamp" approval of variance requests, in spite of vehement civic league opposition. As a result, changing from duplex to single family is perceived to be the solution to that problem. Rezoning Ocean Park is not the right answer. Rezoning Ocean Park is not in the best interest of the community. Rezoning Ocean Park would adversely affect the neighborhood in the following four ways.

FIRST, and foremost, it would adversely affect the marketability and property values of our neighborhood. Property values would decrease, perhaps as much as 25% to



35% or more. While the proliferation of two-unit condominiums has not been accepted by some in Ocean Park, the market appeal and demand for this type of housing have been major factors in the rapid appreciation of property values in our area.

SECONDLY, If Ocean Park were down-zoned, every duplex, condominium, townhome and single family home with a rental apartment would be deemed a "non-conforming use." That would mean that an attempt by a property owner to add an addition, garage, deck, or otherwise improve their property, may be required to appear before the City Council for permission to do so. If a property were to burn down, there would be restrictions on the rebuilding of that property. We do not need these additional restrictions to our property rights imposed on us.

THIRDLY, while single-family neighborhoods are generally more desirable, Ocean Park is not a single family neighborhood. The composition of Ocean Park, including Pelican Dunes, Aires, and Mariners' Landing, as of February, 1998, is as follows: single family homes, 281 (26%); townhomes, 363 (33%); condominiums, 208 (19%); duplexes, 116 (11%); and (undeveloped) lots, 101 (9%). As you can see, Ocean Park is not and will not ever be a single family neighborhood. Rezoning the neighborhood in order to affect the remaining 9% of the neighborhood does not make sense.

LASTLY, single family zoning allows a homeowner to build within 8' of the side yard property line. Duplexes must maintain a 10' set-back. In actuality, changing the zoning would allow builders to build closer to the property line (without obtaining a variance) than they are currently allowed under

duplex zoning. The proximity of these new homes to the neighboring property is exactly what many in the area are trying to prevent. The answer to the problem is not rezoning Ocean Park. The civic league should explore options that would require the BZA to strictly enforce the zoning ordinances, granting variances only in cases of proven hardships. I believe that this would be a much quicker, more effective, and less costly approach for Ocean Park.

R. Mark Johnson

**Editor's Note:**

While we are upset with the BZA, our concern has been the increasing population density and congestion, e.g.: issues of safety, traffic, and parking in Ocean Park. Mr. Johnson makes some very good points for the civic league not to pursue single family zoning, but there is a point that has been overlooked: There are 117 undeveloped properties in Ocean Park which the Assessor's Office does not further define into buildable lots. It seems that the builders and their pursuit of variances determine how many buildable lots there are on a piece of undeveloped property.

I do agree with Mr. Johnson that we should consider all options before starting down a path to control population density, and we should take another look at how the BZA approves variances, and even consider challenging their decisions. Let us hear what you think about the issue. Come to the May 7th meeting!!

Jim McElligott, Managing Editor

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
for  
**OCEAN PARK CIVIC LEAGUE**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ OWN \_\_\_\_\_ RENT \_\_\_\_\_

Length of Residence  
in Ocean Park \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Socials \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Interest in Ocean Park Civic League  
Delivery of Newsletter/Meeting Announcements \_\_\_\_\_ Committees \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify the committee(s) in which you are most interested \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL APPLICATION WITH YOUR CHECK FOR \$5.00 PAYABLE TO: MRS. BETTY WOOD, TREASURER; OCEAN PARK CIVIC LEAGUE; POST OFFICE BOX 55385; VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA 23455-5385..