



Eastside Express

Circulation 630 Households

Volume 30 No. 5&6

◆ River Forrest Shores ◆ Wayside Manor ◆ Easton Place Civic League

Join your civic league at a May 9 public hearing on the real estate tax rate and tell the City of Norfolk to lower the tax rate!

The City of Norfolk’s recent real estate assessments will result in sizable increases in homeowners’ real estate taxes. For example, of the 181 neighborhoods in this city, River Forrest Shores recorded the 7th largest percentage increase citywide while Wayside Manor ranked 14th. Several factors have since caused civic league leadership to step forward to launch a movement to convince City Council to lower the tax rate to \$1.18 per \$100 of assessed value. The current rate is \$1.25. **We need you to join with us and attend a public hearing on the tax rate on Tuesday, May 9 at 5:30 p.m. on the 11th floor of the City Hall Building. Let’s pack the house and make our point that taxes in Norfolk are way too high for what we are getting in services!**
(Continued on page 3)

Norfolk Councilwoman and Virginia Senate Candidate Andria McClellan to address civic league

Norfolk City Councilwoman and Virginia Senate hopeful Andria McClellan will be the guest speaker for the civic league’s May 8 meeting. She will address some of the major issues facing the City of Norfolk as well as her decision to seek a seat in the Virginia Senate. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church.



Councilwoman McClellan, who was first elected to City Council in 2016, represents Superward 6 which is not our district. However, she does deliberate and vote on citywide issues that are important to us, such as the adoption of annual operating and capital budgets and work on major development projects such as the planned casino and Military Circle redevelopment. She is running as a Democrat for an open, newly created State Senate seat in District 21, which is fully located within the Norfolk city boundaries. Among the issues she hopes to work on for Virginians are flooding and climate change, education and childcare, and affordable housing, to name a few. To learn more about her other priorities, check out her website at andriaforsenate.com.

Councilwoman McClellan grew up in Hampton Roads, graduating from Green Run High School in Virginia Beach. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia. (Continued on page 3)

Recycle Dates
May 16th and 30th, June 13th and 27th
Please put your recycling can out.
Street Sweeping: June 23rd

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May Meeting
Will be held in the social hall at Aldersgate United Methodist Church on May 8, at 7:00 p.m.

Join our civic league Facebook conversation

Facebook: A great way to stay in touch with neighborhood news

One of the best ways of keeping up with what's happening in our three neighborhoods is monitoring our civic league Facebook page. If you aren't part of the group yet, then take note that you need to be. You can search for us on Facebook by entering *New River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League* and then simply send us a request to join.

Here's a little sample of what has been posted on that page recently: impending traffic changes because of work on the Military Highway Bridge; information about electronics recycling; and registration information for the T2 Fitness Foundation's T2 Fresh Start Initiative Norfolk Cohort.

And your civic league has helped create a Norfolk, Lower Our Taxes Facebook page
Check it out!

Following the enormous hike in our real estate assessments and a budget proposal that shows the Eastside of Norfolk is getting very little for its money, the civic league leadership decided to challenge the city. *Our message: Increase the investment in neighborhoods OR lower our taxes.* One way to get the word out on our efforts was to create a Facebook page where we could reach residents from other under-served neighborhoods like ours. If you haven't joined this page yet, please do. The more members we have the more our message will resonate with city officials. You can find us by searching for Norfolk, Lower Our Taxes or enter this URL address in your browser: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/norfolklowerourtaxrate>.

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Presidents Corner

Your civic league is busy working hard for our community! When our volunteers knock on your door asking you to join the league, please consider what this organization does for our entire community.

A story in this publication that should not only interest you, but should also concern you is how the city spends our tax dollars. The majority of the city's Capital Improvement Budget proposal is once again going to downtown and the westside while the rest of the city gets very little. City Council will vote on this budget May 23, 2023! You can weigh in on this inequity by emailing Council at ccouncil@norfolk.gov.

I am keeping this brief, but urge you to read closely the article about the Real Estate Tax assessments and our efforts to demand the city reduce the tax rate to \$1.18 from \$1.25. **PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US MAY 9, 2023 @ 5:30 pm in the City Council Chambers, 11th floor City Hall.** Many of us will be riding the Tide while others will be offering carpooling options. If interested in carpooling please contact KK German (757)714-2335.

WE NEED YOU!

(Continued from page 1—Andria McClellan) After UVA, she worked on the sales and marketing teams of two Fortune 500 companies, graduated from the Wharton Management Program at the University of Pennsylvania, and ran two small businesses. She currently serves as the chair of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission; as commissioner and past chair of Hampton Roads Transit; and as a board member for the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation. She also serves on the statewide Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend as this is a meeting you won't want to miss!

(Continued from page 1—Tax Rate)

Here is why we support a tax decrease:

- The city admitted in a recent ad in *The Virginian-Pilot* that the tax rate could be lowered to \$1.18 as this level of tax would produce the same amount of money as Norfolk is now receiving.

- Norfolk neighborhoods are being shortchanged by the city's proposed Capital Improvement Plan budget (*see a related story in this issue that proves that point*). The vast majority of the allocated money, 62.2 percent of named projects, is going to downtown and the westside while all other neighborhoods are getting only 5.4 percent of the CIP funding. (The reason why these numbers don't add up to 100 percent is there are projects in the CIP that aren't identified with a specific location such as the purchase of vehicles or street improvements citywide. We analyzed all the projects that were identified with a geographic location.)
- We have concerns about the magnitude of some increases in our neighborhood assessments. For example, a home in River Forrest Shores sold for \$350,000 in October 2022 and then in March 2023 was assessed at \$444,700. So essentially there was a difference of \$94,700 between the sale price and the assessment. Our rationale may be over-simplified, but this just seems downright inequitable and needs to be questioned.

Join our *Norfolk, Lower the Tax Rate* Facebook page for important updates on this initiative.

An unfair Capital Improvement Plan: Tell City Council to invest in neighborhoods or decrease our real estate tax!

Each year Norfolk City Council adopts a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget. A CIP pays for improvements to existing infrastructure like streets, utilities, and city buildings. It also pays for new development projects. Here's the problem with city capital spending: Over the years, without fail, its resources have been overwhelmingly dedicated to downtown and the westside with very little going to the improvement of our neighborhoods and schools. This year is no different. It is, in essence, the same old sad story.

The proposed CIP for Fiscal Year 2024 is \$414 million. Of that number, \$260 million is programmed for downtown and the westside. In comparison, the neighborhoods are getting only \$22 million. Only \$26.89 million has been set aside for major maintenance projects for **48 schools.**

(Continued on page 7)



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2023

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET UPDATE



New Listings
IN JAN

DOWN
2.6%
FROM 2022

737 in JAN 2023
from 757 in JAN 2022



Current Homes For Sale
IN JAN

UP
42.9%
FROM 2022

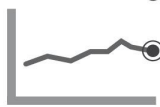
1,040 in JAN 2023
from 728 in JAN 2022



Homes Sold
IN JAN

DOWN
34.9%
FROM 2022

496 in JAN 2023
from 762 in JAN 2022



Average Days on Market
IN JAN

UP
11 Days
FROM 2022

23 in JAN 2023
from 12 in JAN 2022



Median Sold Price
IN JAN

UP
4.1%
FROM 2022

\$351,500 in JAN 2023
from \$337,500 in JAN 2022



Sold to List Price
IN JAN

DOWN
1.4%
FROM 2022

99.4% in JAN 2023
from 100.8% in JAN 2022



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 Phone: (757) 466-9461
 Sunday School: 9:45am
 Worship Service: 11:00am

Vacation Bible School

We will be doing VBS this year on July 17-21. Dinner for children will be served at 5:30pm, classes will be held from 6-8:00pm. Commencement will be at 11am on July 23. We will have classes for Pre-K through 12th grade and we will also have a class for adults.

2023 Board of Directors

Debby Forehand, President

Debby4hand@gmail.com
 (757)478-7585

Kathy O'Hara, First Vice President

keohara@cox.net
 (757)461-5252 - home

Liz Albert, Second Vice President

AlbertfamilyVA@aol.com
 (757)681-0131

Sarah Ware, Recording Secretary

Ceraann1@gmail.com
 (757)679-3692

Lisa Gragg, Corresponding Secretary

Happyjalapeno6@yahoo.com
 (757)373-2658

K.K. German, Treasurer

Kkgerman@gmail.com
 (757)714-2335

Susan Foley, Trustee

graywolf_23462@yahoo.com
 (757)455-6689 - home

Suzanne Duncan, First Vice Trustee

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Dustin Wallace, Second Vice Trustee

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Worship Experience — 11:00am

Update on speed cushions

The civic league has some good news to share. According to Norfolk Acting Director of Transit John Stevenson a bid has been issued for the installation of speed cushions on Sellger Drive. While we can't give you a firm date when installation will begin, we are hopeful it won't be long.



The civic league hosts regular trash pickups in the Military Gardens area and along Curlew Drive. Those interested in volunteering can contact

KK German to be added to the notification list for scheduled cleanups. Her number is 757-714-2335. Volunteers from the most recent clean-up effort were, from left: Ben Bush, Chris Glaves, Kathy O'Hara, Mary Barrett and Mike Barrett. Not pictured but who should also be mentioned are Bill Bunch, Rachel Plumley and Lucas Plumley. Many thanks to all!

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(Continued from page 3—CIP) Here is just a sample of what is planned for the downtown and westside:

Construct Downtown Flood Wall	\$93,000,000
Downtown Traffic Study	\$ 1,500,000
Improve Cruise Terminal	\$12,000,000
Improve Scope Arena Plaza/Renovate Harrison Opera House	\$ 4,850,000
Improve Harbor Park	\$ 2,500,000
Provide Matching Funds for Nauticus Exhibit Renovation	\$ 6,000,000
Improve 23 rd Street Streetscapes	\$ 3,500,000
Improve The Art District Streetscapes	\$ 4,500,000
Construct and Rehabilitate Hague Bulkhead	\$ 2,750,000
Rehabilitate Pagoda Basin Waterfront and Pierpointe Waterfront	\$ 1,500,000
Acquire and Renovate Rosna Theatre	\$ 5,000,000
Provide Funds for Tidewater Community College’s Visual Arts Center	\$ 2,000,000
Construct Recreation/Library Facility at the NFWC	\$65,550,000
Provide Funding for St. Paul’s Bridge	\$ 6,000,000
Construct Blue/Greenway -St. Paul’s Area	\$17,215,200
Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements - St. Paul’s Area	\$ 2,200,000
Water Infrastructure Improvements - St. Paul’s Area	\$ 2,200,000
Revitalization St. Paul’s Community	\$ 3,000,000

Then when you peel even further into the proposed CIP, you find that funding for the Eastside is especially dismal. Yes, \$10 million is allocated for Military Circle, but that isn’t the same as neighborhood improvement. Here are the planned neighborhood improvements for the Eastside:

Improve Tennis Courts at Lake Taylor Middle School	\$ 1,725,000
Provide Funds for Lowery Road Drainage Improvements	\$ 1,000,000
Improve Glenrock Drainage	\$ 1,000,000

And finally, the CIP is a five-year plan. So while the expenditures above are for the coming FY-24 year, there are some major concerns in the four following years. Chief among them is funding for school maintenance. In FY-25 school maintenance funding drops to \$9 million and in FY-26, 27 and 28 only \$3 million is allocated annually. And it bears repeating - **that’s for 48 schools.**

City Council is slated to vote on this budget on May 23. In the meantime, if you feel this budget is unfair, tell them so via ccouncil@norfolk.gov.

Parking issues at local church

Aldersgate United Methodist Church is having some issues with cars being left in its parking lot for an extended period of time and wants the community to know how this will be handled.

Church officials understand there may be occasions that call for a resident to move a car to a parking area outside of the residence’s driveway especially when nearby on-street parking is limited. For example, residents may need additional parking when they are accommodating visitors’ vehicles; initiating driveway improvements; or hosting an event that requires considerable parking. However, when a vehicle is left in the church parking lot

for 48 hours or more and the church office has not been notified, action will be taken.

If residents in the vicinity of the church need to avail themselves of the church parking lot overnight or for 48 hours or more, they should contact the church office at 757-466-8999 and advise staff of that need. The church will need the make, model and license plate of the vehicle in question and how long the neighbor will need to use the lot. Absent that information, the church will, after 48 hours, report the vehicle as abandoned to the City of Norfolk and thus seek its removal.

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**Minutes
General Meeting**

**River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic
League**

March 13, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Debby Forehand at 7:01 p.m. Kathy O'Hara was asked to say the invocation and pledge of Allegiance, which she did.

Officer Brown from the Norfolk Police Department gave the safety report. He noted the robbery of an individual had taken place near the bus stop at the Newtown Road Tide station where a gun was implied. An investigation was still on going at the time of reporting to the Civic League. There was also one stolen automobile reported. Officer Brown also invited everyone to complete the survey for a new Chief of Police; this link had been posted on the Civic League Facebook page.

President Forehand next introduced Carrie Diop who is the manager of the Bureau of Recreation and Community Wellness. This department is responsible for everything that is not parks, aquatic, and fields. Ms. Diop discussed what her department manages and programs that are available to residents of Norfolk.

- Therapeutic Recreation Center for persons with disabilities

- Athletic programs including soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, etc.

- Boxing facility at Park Place for all ages

- Norfolk Fitness & Wellness has pickleball and fitness classes

- Norfolk Emerging Leaders, which is a great opportunity for young adults and older students where they provide excellent first job experience and mentorship.

- Beach operations where they supply lifeguards from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

- Paddling program in the fall and spring that incorporates keep Norfolk Beautiful Clean-Up

- The cost for a recreation center membership is \$ 50 per year for a Norfolk resident.

Ms. Diop agreed to send our civic league the city assessment on outdoor facilities as our residents feel our

side of the city is often left out when it comes to distribution of funds.

President Forehand asked Dustin Wallace, 2nd Vice Trustee, if we had a quorum to adopt the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Wallace replied in the affirmative and the minutes were adopted with a vote from the audience.

President Forehand next discussed the upcoming membership drive and the need for volunteers. Any volunteers would meet at the East Coast Gospel Lighthouse the following Monday at 6:30 p.m. for assignments. Next order of business was to address the 5 priorities City Councilman Paige asked our civic league to identify so he, in turn, could be prepared to address these with City Council. The 5 things sent to him are as follows:

1. Intentions for the property of Easton Preschool need to be identified;
2. The traffic in our area is uncontrolled; when will the speed cushions be installed?
3. Better communication about the Military Circle Mall project with taxpayers;
4. More equitable investment for the east side of Norfolk; AND
5. What is happening with school system capital improvement? If no Casino is being built, then there is no new revenue and in turn no new schools will be built.

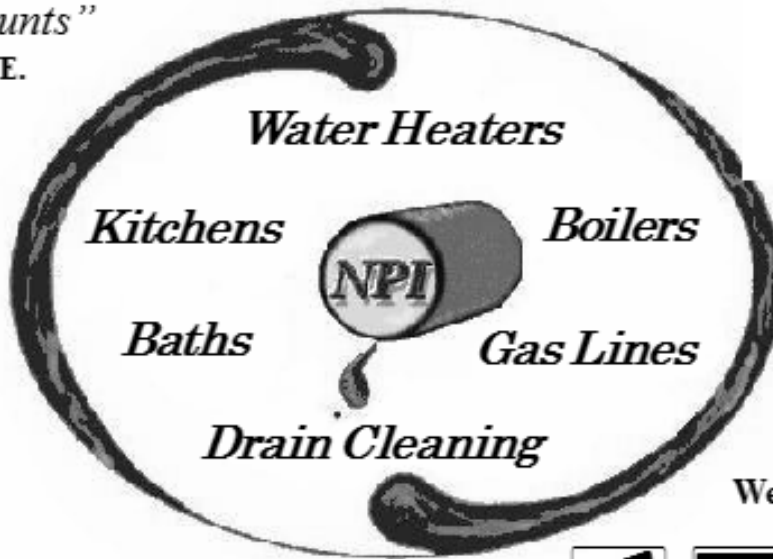
It was shared that the April speaker would be Kin-dra Green from the Elizabeth River trail and it was recommended we all take a field trip to the trail.

Next order of business was to discuss if the civic league should invite the Riverside Station Apartments to join the civic league. After a discussion it was agreed that we would extend an invitation to join our meetings and then see if they had any interest in joining our civic league. A motion was made by Ms. O'Hara to have Mr. Wallace reach out to the apartments to ascertain the feasibility of inviting the residents to the meetings and exploring a relationship, which was seconded by Mr. Rick Thomas. (Continued on page 11)

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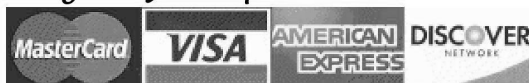


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(Continue from page 9—March 13 Minutes) President Forehand encouraged the residents to attend the pop-up meetings regarding the light-rail extension. The residents need to voice their opinions, so they have a say in how their tax dollars are spent as well as what happens in their city.

With no further business to discuss Mrs. Suzanne Duncan made a motion to adjourn, This was seconded by Mr. Rick Thomas at 8:18pm.

Minutes

General Meeting

River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League

April 10, 2023

President Debby Forehand called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance was President Debby Forehand, 1st VP Kathy O’Hara, 2nd VP Liz Albert, Corresponding Secretary Lisa Gragg, Recording Secretary Sarah Ware, Treasurer KK German, 1st Vice Trustee Suzanne Duncan, and 2nd Vice Trustee Dustin Wallace. 2nd Vice President Albert was called upon to say the invocation and lead the pledge of allegiance.

Officer Brown gave the crime report as thus, last month 1 report of larceny automobile and 1 burglary outside the neighborhood at QuickMart; an investigation was still ongoing. There has been a downward trend in catalytic converter theft across the city. He will also let us know the status of free steering wheel locks supplied by the city for high-risk vehicles. These vehicles include Kia and Hyundai. If there is a surplus after distribution, they will then be given to anyone who would like them. A new chief of police has been selected from Hampton and will start no later than May 1st.

President Forehand next introduced the first speaker for the evening, Ms. Sherri Dawson who is the manager for the transit development for the LightRail expansion. The current project activities include Phase 1 of the Tide expansion onto north Kempsville Road, adding a stop across the street from Norfolk Sentara Leigh Hospital, and continuing over Interstate 64 towards Military Circle

to touch down behind Costco. She gave a website www.navalstationNorfolktransit.com. She noted an open house to discuss plans would be held on April 30th where HRT officials would discuss benefits, burdens, and balancing ideas. There will be an environmental and cost impact study available this summer to include ridership and parking availability. The civic league would like to bring Ms. Dawson back in the early fall to discuss the findings. Her email is sdawson@hrtransit.org

The second speaker of the night was Virginia Delegate Angela Williams Graves of the 90th House District. She informed us that the City of Norfolk will have its own seat in the house this fall because of the redrawing of lines due to population shift. Ms. Williams Graves is most proud of the work she has been able to accomplish while serving including bills to regulate daycares within the City of Norfolk where there was none, jury duty daily pay increase, and a bill to protect the surviving spouse should one die while accumulating hospital expenses. She reported that the state found a surplus of \$233 million. Delegates will put forth plans to spend this money which could include schools, VA retirement system and state contract overages. Once all basic needs are met and if no agreement can be made in the state government then the governor will add the dollar amount to the budget for next year. Delegate Williams Graves then announced that she will be running for election to the new redistricted Senate seat for the City of Norfolk which takes effect in January 2024.

Mrs. Albert next gave an account on her research of the CIP budget as can be found on the City of Norfolk’s website. It was reported that downtown gets just under 50 percent of the city’s budget. The real estate values varied across the city disproportionately. If any resident is not happy with the assessment they received they can appeal the values to the city directly. A special meeting could be scheduled for assessment appeal instruction.

There was a reminder that the membership drive was in full swing and that anyone 80 years of age or older did qualify for the lifetime membership.

With no further business to discuss, Mrs. Duncan made a motion to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Mrs. Albert at 8:32 p.m..

Treasurer's Budget Report
RFS/WM/EP Civic League
For the month ended April 30, 2023

	Annual Budget	Current Month Actual	Year to date Actual	Over (under) Budget
Income				
Newsletter Ads	1,415		470	(945)
Dues	1,500	323	508	(992)
Interest earned	260		65	(195)
Donations and Other			1	1
Total Income	3,175	323	1,044	(2,131)
Disbursements				
Newsletter Printing	1,550	51	632	(918)
Membership Drive	40			(40)
Postage/Office Supplies	25			(25)
Meeting Refreshments	20			(20)
Door Prizes	80		80	-
CL Meeting Hall	315		315	-
Federation Dues	20			(20)
Awards	100			(100)
Special Events	1,850			(1,850)
Incorporation fees	25		25	-
Board Meeting Hall	100			(100)
Other	[1] 55	4	6	(49)
Total Disbursements	4,180	55	1,058	(3,122)
Net Income (Outflow)	(1,005)	268	(14)	991

[1] \$5.66 paypal fees

	Checking	Trust Reserve (Savings)	Trust Account (CD)	Total cash
Reconciliation:				
1/1/2023	522.55	3,116.20	11,728.31	15,367.06
2023 year to date (from above column)				(14.11)
				<u>15,352.95</u>
4/30/2023	943.54	2,616.53	11,792.88	<u>15,352.95</u>