

EASTSIDE EXPRESS

March/April

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Civic League hosting its annual membership and donation drive during April

If you have never been a member, your membership has expired, or you simply want to make a donation to the civic league, note that a neighbor will be contacting you in April to invite you to support the work of the River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League.

Personal contact with you may come in the form of a knock on your door, a telephone call, an email or a combination thereof. Either way, please answer when the volunteer reaches out to you. Candidly, last year's membership drive fell short of what was budgeted. If it wasn't for the fact that some community-minded neighbors made generous donations, the RFS/WM/EP Civic League would have been way under budget!

Candidly, the civic league board found the 2024 budget shortfall ironic considering this civic league has the lowest membership costs in the City of Norfolk. The civic league has also proved to be an excellent advocate for our neighborhoods' interests with city leaders, from lobbying to lower the real estate tax to ensuring the Easton Pre-school building remained a school and thus exempt from high density development.

(continued on page 2)

March's guest speaker will share progress on expanding the Elizabeth River Trail

The River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League will host Kindra Greene, executive director of the Elizabeth River Trail (ERT) Foundation, as the guest speaker for the Monday, March 10 membership meeting. The meeting will convene at 7 p.m. in Aldersgate United Methodist Church.



The ERT is an a 10.5 mile urban trail that follows the Elizabeth River through downtown and beyond for a birds-eye view of attractions, ships, barges, vessels from the world's largest naval installation and the world-famous Port of Hampton Roads. Attractions along the way include the Battleship Wisconsin, Nauticus, the Pagoda, the Chrysler Museum of Art, Hermitage Museum and Gardens and the 19th-century Fort Norfolk. Visitors can also visit breweries, restaurants and shops.

Some residents may remember that the civic league hosted Ms. Greene last June. Of course, a lot has happened with the ERT since then so this is our chance to hear an update. The ERT Foundation is engineering a plan to connect the trail to our neighbors in Virginia Beach as well as to the Virginia Capital Trail and the East Coast Greenway

(continued on page 2)

Recycle Dates

March 3rd, 17th, and 31st

April 14 & 28th

Please put your recycling can out.

Street Sweeping:
March 28th

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March Meeting

Will be held in the social hall at
Aldersgate United Methodist
Church on March 10th, at 7:00
p.m.

(Continued from page 1—ERT Expansion)

by way of tributary trails across the region that lead to the ERT. How much progress has been made towards achieving these goals? Ms. Greene will fill us in and also share the volunteer opportunities available to people who want to support the Foundation’s work.

Kindra Greene is a graduate of Virginia Wesleyan University and holds an MFA from Queens University of Charlotte. She served two years in the Virginia Service and Conservation Corps through AmeriCorps as a park interpreter and natural resource ranger. She is an educator and has worked in various roles in non-profit management focused on community building and economic development. She is a certified interpretive guide, a member of the Urban Land Institute Virginia and a Tidewater Master Naturalist.

If you can’t make the meeting, attend virtually!

The RFS/WM/EP Civic League now offers residents the chance to attend via Zoom. Just mark you calendar for March 10 at 7 p.m. and visit this page on our website to “drop in”: <https://eastsidecivicleague.org/zoom-meetings/>.

(Continued from page 1-Membership)

One year’s membership is just \$5 per person while a three-year membership is just \$12 per person. It is likely we will need to raise the membership dues next year, so consider taking advantage of the lower three-year rate by joining or renewing now!

The dues can be paid by credit card or PayPal via our website, eastsidecivicleague.org, or by mailing /dropping off a check to our treasurer KK German at 5924 Jerry Road. Here is her phone number, 757-714-2335, if you want to call her or text her about your dues or delivery method. Or, if you simply want me to pick up your dues, please contact me by phone or email. I am always happy to help!

Liz Albert
Second Vice-President
Membership/Donation Drive Chairperson
757-681-0131
albertfamilyva@aol.com

What has a strong civic league delivered to this community?

Here are five good examples:

1. A strong civic league is an advocate for its community and our civic league has done just that. Our efforts slowed down cut-through traffic on Sellger Drive by getting the city to install speed cushions; helping secure a real estate tax decrease in 2024; ensuring the inclusion of funds in the city’s capital improvement budget for the future Eastside Fitness and Wellness Center; and proving to be the driving force for the retention of the Easton Preschool building by Norfolk Public Schools.
2. A civic league infuses its neighborhoods with a sense of community. It provides a gathering place for neighbors to meet neighbors. Besides holding regular meetings, the civic league also hosts special events such as a fall picnic, a Christmas party and an ice cream social.
3. A good civic league will keep its members updated on important resources and neighborhood news. For example, upcoming guest speakers for this year include Superward 7 City Councilman Carlos Clanton and a representative from VDOT to discuss the progress on the 64/264 interchange upgrades.
4. A strong civic league offers its residents a variety of ways to make neighborhood connections. The RFS/WM/EP Civic League manages a robust Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RFSCivicLeague>, devoted to neighborhood news. Also, our comprehensive website is now available at eastsidecivicleague.org. Via our website, neighbors now have the option of attending meetings virtually.
5. And finally, a good civic league reaches out to everyone in its community. For example, we publish a newsletter that is hand delivered to every household in our service area.

Officer to be installed

The March 10th meeting will also feature the installation of our Corresponding Secretary, Lisa Gragg.



PRESIDENT’S CORNER

Looking Ahead to a Promising 2025

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes a fresh start for our community. As we move into March and April, we are gearing up for an exciting year, with many important initiatives on the horizon that will shape the future of Eastside Norfolk.

April marks the start of our annual membership drive, and I encourage all residents to join or renew their membership. Our civic league is strongest when we come together as a community, and your support—whether through participation, volunteerism, or financial contributions—allows us to continue advocating for the Eastside. Liz Albert, our 2nd Vice President, will be leading the drive again this year, and we hope to see record participation. Be on the lookout for canvassers in the neighborhood, and remember, a small investment in membership goes a long way in ensuring our collective voice is heard.

Another major focus for our civic league is the future of Military Circle Mall. An updated phasing plan for its demolition will soon be approved and demolition is expected to begin, lasting approximately 12 to 14 months. This development will be a significant step forward for the area, and we will stay engaged in the process to ensure that community interests remain a priority.

A special shoutout and much appreciation to Sheriff's Department for their recent efforts at the Military Circle Mall site. Their work saved the city approximately \$50,000 in landscaping expenses—another great example of how collaboration benefits our community.

Stay Connected and Get Involved

Our civic league thrives on participation, and there are many ways to stay engaged. Whether through volunteering, attending meetings, or simply staying informed, your involvement makes a difference. If you ever have questions, concerns, or ideas, I am always just an email away at edith.lizalde@yahoo.com.

With appreciation,

Edith Lizalde
President

Important Numbers

Norfolk Cares

Assistance Center

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Our Community Officer:

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Christy Siepert

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General Membership Meeting
River Forest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place
Civic League
January 13 2025

President Debby Forehand called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Second Vice President Liz Albert provided the invocation and led those attending in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Forehand then stated that she nominated Suzanne Duncan to be recording secretary, and asked if anyone else wished to nominate themselves or someone else for the position. No one else volunteered/made a recommendation so President Forehand called the vote for Suzanne Duncan to hold that position. This was approved by a vote of the membership present.

President Forehand presided over the installation of officers. The new officers for 2025 are: President: Edith Lizalde; 1st Vice-President: Kathy O'Hara; 2nd Vice-President: Liz Albert Recording Secretary: Suzanne Duncan; Corresponding Secretary: Lisa Gragg; Treasurer: K.K. German; Trustee: Dustin Wallace; 1st Vice Trustee: Nick Masella; and 2nd Vice Trustee: Garrett Beaver. They were sworn in by outgoing President Forehand, who then passed the gavel to President Edith Lizalde to run the rest of the meeting. Edith thanked Debby for her leadership and for being an example of excellent community service.

Community Resource Officer Report

Officer Joseph Brown reported there was one incident of aggravated assault, which was closed with an arrest on Midge Crescent. He warned that the rates of larceny from autos and stolen autos often pick up when the weather is cold. He said larceny tends to occur when cars are left unlocked. Cars tend to be stolen when they are left running unattended. He said residents should be attentive when using remote starting as cars can be stolen if their remotes are left inside vehicles.

Program for the evening

Pamela Marino, the city's interim director of budget and strategic planning, and Jason Beasley, budget policy manager, were present to address Norfolk's budget process for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Marino pointed out that a comprehensive City Budget Overview process is outlined on the city's website at [Budget & Strategic Planning | City of Norfolk, Virginia - Official Website](#). She then explained the difference between the city's operating budget and its capital improvement plan (CIP) budget. The former covers day-to-day expenses of the city, such as salaries, utilities, supplies, and public services. This budget is short-term and reviewed annually. It addresses the operational needs of departments and public programs. The latter is a long-term financial plan for infrastructure, buildings, and major investments. The CIP includes projects such as new fire stations, school buildings, roadways, and major repairs. Funding is planned for five years, but only the current year's projects are appropriated and funded. CIP projects tend to be items that last

the duration of a bond payment (20 years).

Other features of the budget process Ms. Marino outlined were:

Budget Timeline

The city follows a structured annual timeline for budget planning:

- Late Summer (August/September): Departments submit budget and CIP requests. Long-term financial forecasts are developed.
- Fall (September-November): Departmental meetings are held to refine budget requests.
- Winter (December-February): The city manager and budget team review department proposals line-by-line. The proposed budget is finalized for presentation.
- Spring (March-May): The proposed budget is presented to City Council in March. Community engagement intensifies through hearings and feedback collection. Council reviews, amends, and adopts the final budget in May.

Community Engagement

Residents are actively encouraged to participate in the budgeting process through: Citizen Cents and Balancing Act: An online tool that allows users to create their own budget proposals. Online Feedback: Citizens can use the city's online portal to submit suggestions or comments about budget allocations. Public Hearings: Formal hearings allow residents to voice their opinions directly to City Council during the budget reconciliation period (March-May).

Open Data Platform

This is a dedicated online hub for transparency and accountability which; features datasets, dashboards, and interactive maps for public access. Examples of available data are; CIP progress by location and ward, call response times from city services, historic records like underground storage tank information, and tools such as Power BI dashboards for visualizing and analyzing city operations. This resource is intended to empower residents with insights into city operations. This approach streamlines Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests by making commonly sought information publicly accessible.

Other Business/Special Recognition

The next item on the agenda was an overview of the Finance Report which was also cited as being available in the newsletter. Afterwards Debby Forehand was honored with a plaque and card for her 10 years of service. The plaque included an expression of gratitude from the civic league.

A motion was made by Dustin Wallace to approve the November 2024 meeting minutes and was seconded by Suzanne Duncan. The motion was unanimously approved. The door prize raffle was won by Nick Masella.

A motion was made by Mrs Duncan and second by Mr. Wallace to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed by all present. The meeting adjourned at 8:30.

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<u>Size</u>	<u>Five issues</u>	<u>Single Issue</u>
1/8th page	\$55	\$20
1/4 page	\$80	\$25
1/2 page	\$155	\$50
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-Karen Davis

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Our civic league is advocating for the construction of an Eastside recreation center/library

Norfolk city leadership is now working on the development of operating and capital budgets for the 2025-26 fiscal year. These budgets are important to all residents because they affect our day-to-day lives. The operating budget pays for the services we receive, such as public safety, libraries, water treatment and delivery, recreation opportunities, and road maintenance, to name a few. The capital improvement plan (CIP) budget pays for large infrastructure and building projects such as school construction and maintenance, renovation of cultural facilities, and fire station replacements, again to name a few.

This civic league has worked diligently over the years to lobby Norfolk City Council and city management for the construction of a combined recreation center-library for Eastside Norfolk. Civic league leaders have made the point over and over again that downtown and the Westside of Norfolk have received the lion's share of all city CIP budgets over the last several decades. For example, construction is to begin soon on the \$68 million Norfolk Fitness and Wellness Center in the Wards Corner area.

And we need that recreation center-library sooner rather than later!

Because of our consistent advocacy there is \$350,000 set aside in Year One of the current five-year CIP for a needs assessment study for an Eastside Recreation Center. This funding will be used to help determine possible sites for a new center, what programming should go into that center and how much space will be needed. It is great news that this money is planned in the first year (2025) of the CIP. However, when you look at the other four years of the CIP (2026-2029) there is NO MONEY SET ASIDE FOR CONSTRUCTION. We need to make sure that sad fact is changed in the new five-year CIP that will be adopted in May of this year.

Please join us in advocating that a new Eastside recreation center-library be built within this five-year time line! Norfolk City Council will be hosting a public hearing in April. We will alert you when that date is finalized and ask you to accompany us to that public hearing so our voices can be heard.

VDOT's I-64-I-264 Interchange Project and what it means for our area

Residents are well aware that the Virginia Department of Transportation has undertaken major improvement efforts on the I-64/1-264 Interchange in recent years, implementing them in phases. For example, in Phase II, interchanges at Newtown Road and Witchduck Road were improved and a Greenwich Road flyover, across I-264, connected Greenwich with Cleveland Street.

But wait there's more!

In Phase III there are planned traffic changes that will happen in our part of Norfolk and beyond. These include: Widening I-64 east from four to five lanes between the Northampton Boulevard interchange to the I-264 interchange.

- Adding a high occupancy tolled, part-time shoulder Express Lane along the inside shoulder of I-64 east between Northampton Boulevard and the Twin Bridges over the Elizabeth River.
- Replacing the existing flyover ramp from I-64 east to I-264 east with a two-lane ramp that will lead the recently widened collector-distributor (C-D) lanes on I-264 near Newtown Road.
- Widening the bridges on I-64 east over Kempsville Road and Virginia Beach Boulevard, and the I-264 inside bridge over Newtown Road.

These are big-picture plans, but what is the timeline for the overall project and its component parts? What kind of traffic changes might affect us in the interim? We plan to host a VDOT representative to address such questions (most likely in June). But in the meantime, if you want to learn more about VDOT's plans, visit this webpage: <https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/hampton-roads-district/i-64i-264-interchange-improvements-phase-iiia/>

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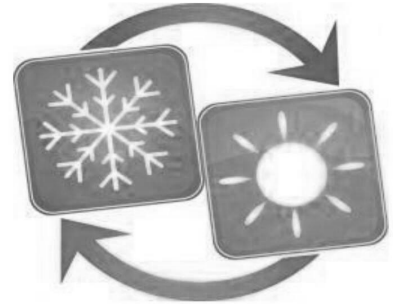
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At the January 2025 meeting

Outgoing President Debby Forehand presided over the installation of officers for 2025. They are: President, Edith Lizalde; First Vice President, Kathy O’Hara; Second Vice President, Liz Albert; Treasurer, KK German; Corresponding Secretary, Lisa Gragg; Trustee, Dustin Wallace; First Vice Trustee, Nick Masala; and Second Vice Trustee, Garrett Beaver.

As part of the evening outgoing President Debby Forehand was honored for her decade of excellent service to the civic league. She received framed photos as a salute to her leadership.





Sheriff Joe Baron



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General Membership Meeting

River Forest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League

Feb. 10, 2025

President Edith Lizalde called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. The invocation and opening prayer were led by 2nd Vice President Liz Albert.

Mrs. Lizalde then introduced Officer Logan from the Norfolk Police Department. Officer Logan is the community resource officer for downtown. He was filling in for our assigned community resource officer, Officer Joseph Brown, who was on leave at the time.

Initially Officer Logan reported there had been no incidents in our neighborhoods, but was advised by those attending that there had been a major police response on Kidd Blvd., which took place on Jan. 21. He was then asked if he could perhaps provide the community a little more information. Officer Logan told those present he would check on this and come back to the podium when he had some information. When he returned, he noted the response was related to a domestic situation and no arrests had been made since the response was related to a wellness concern.

Mrs. Lizalde then introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Susan Girois, director of the Norfolk Department of Public Health. Dr. Girois noted she wanted to begin with a conversation with residents. Among the conversation points were a summary of lessons learned by her, her staff and other city leaders from the pandemic. She then went on to explain some of the services the department offered such as communicable disease and outbreak prevention, environmental health services and protection such as dealing with mosquito infestations,, beach monitoring, vital records such as birth and death certificates, health inspections and permits in areas like restaurant monitoring, pre-school physicals and childhood immunizations and family health services. Her department is also focused on collecting and analyzing health data in a very granular way such as by neighborhood so prevention strategies can be highly targeted.

She noted the department works closely with other partner agencies in such areas as improving maternal and infant health, preventing firearm injury and death, preventing drug overdose deaths and reducing mental health distress. One of the examples she gave was working with the Norfolk Police Department to supply officers with Narcan nasal spray. Narcan is an over-the-counter drug that can reverse opioid overdose by blocking opioid receptors in the body.

Following Dr. Girois' presentation, 2ndVice President Liz Albert reminded those present that the annual membership drive would take place in April and there would be need for volunteers to help make contact with their neighbors. Afterwards, a conversation was facilitated by 1st Vice Trustee Nick Masella about the 2025 civic league budget, the value of membership and what appears to be a need to raise membership dues. He and Treasurer KK German pointed out that the civic league has been running a deficit the last two years and has had to move funds from savings into the operating budget.

The door prize drawing was then held. The winner was our guest speaker, Dr. Girois.

At the conclusion of this conversation, the meeting was concluded upon a motion made by First Vice President Kathy O'Hara and seconded by several members.

RFS/WM/EP Civic League Membership Application

*Donations
are always welcome from members
and non-members alike!*

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone/email: _____

Membership options: ____ number of \$5 one-year membership(s)
____ number of \$12 three-year membership(s)



Please make check payable to **RFS/WM/EP Civic League** and mail to KK German, Treasurer,
5924 Jerry Road, Norfolk, VA 23502

If you choose to use PayPal, or a debit or credit card, please use the QR code below to access the membership page on our website at eastsidecivicleague.org.