

EASTSIDE EXPRESS

May & June 2026

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Together, let's take a stand for equitable funding for Eastside Norfolk; Join area civic leagues on May 12 as we tell City Council *enough is enough*

On page 5 of this newsletter we have reprinted an opinion editorial that *The Virginian-Pilot* published recently. RFS/WM/EP Civic League President Edith Lizalde penned this pointed assessment of inequitable city spending. Please read it carefully as it summarizes a problem facing Eastside Norfolk. City leadership is over investing in downtown and the westside to the detriment of our geographic area.

Each year civic league leadership analyzes the five-year capital improvement budget (CIP) for the City of Norfolk. We discovered four disturbing issues inherent in the Fiscal Year 2027-31 proposal:

- Money for the promised Eastside Recreation Center-Library has been removed
- No funding has been set aside for Military Circle redevelopment while \$72 million has been recommended for MacArthur Center redevelopment over the next five years
- Only \$8 million has been allocated for school maintenance, cutting in half the School Board's \$17 million request
- The budget is imbalanced as 62.4 percent of the geographically named projects are in the downtown/westside area.

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The Norfolk Public Library system has a lot to offer families this summer

The speaker for the civic league's Monday, May 11 meeting will be Cecilia Ward of the Norfolk Public Library's Community Engagement Office. Her topic for the evening will be summer programming and an overview of the resources the library system has to offer us. The meeting will be held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church at 7 p.m.

If you have children or grandchildren, you will want to attend this meeting to hear all about what the library system has in place for youngsters. For example, from June 7 -Aug. 2, libraries will host a Summer Reading Program Grab Bag distribution. Just stop by your favorite local branch each week to pick up a fun and engaging craft or goodie. The schedule is:

- June 7-13: Paint Palette Craft Kit
- June 14-20: Foam Seahorse Craft
- June 21-27: Color Your Own Tiki Mask
- June 28-July 4: Patriotic Star Suncatcher
- July 5-11: Handprint Flower Pot Craft Kit
- July 12-18: Beaded Jellyfish Craft

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Recycle Dates

May 11th & 25th

Jun 8th & 22nd

Street Sweeping:

May 22nd & Jun 26th

Help Keep our Neighborhood Clean

Bulk waste items: You must **schedule** the pick-up by **3 p.m. the day before** collection. Use mynorfolk.org or call 757-664-6510.

Yard waste: Collected on your normal trash day. Bag leaves and grass in clear plastic bags (or bundle branches) and place at the curb.

May Meeting

Will be held in the social hall at Aldersgate United Methodist Church on May 11th, at 7:00 p.m.

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- July 19-25: Mandala Sand Art
- July 26-Aug. 2: Mini Weaving Basket

The library system has an extensive electronic collection, offers several book clubs, and makes meeting rooms available to the public - just to name a few services.

Our speaker coordinates the volunteer program for the library as well as overseeing the Express Book Nooks which is a source for FREE books and DVDs. She also supervises Mobile Delivery Projects, which is an alternative service to the Book-mobile. It seeks to provide limited library services to patrons who are unable to reach library branches.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jeri Zurbuchen

Our neighborhood thrives because of the people who consistently step up to care for it. This month, we're proud to recognize one of those individuals.

Jeri Zurbuchen is a true cornerstone of our community's volunteer efforts. As a dedicated member of our trash pickup team, she regularly goes above and beyond to help keep our neighborhood clean, safe, and welcoming. Whether it's showing up for scheduled cleanups or taking initiative on her own, Jeri plays a key role in helping us meet our Adopt-A-Spot commitments.



But her impact goes far beyond her hard work. Jeri is known by many as a kind, funny, and thoughtful neighbor who brings not only energy, but also valuable insight and perspective to our community. She's the kind of person who makes this neighborhood feel like home.

We are incredibly grateful for Jeri and all that she does. Please join us in thanking her for helping make our neighborhood a great place to live.

Important Numbers

Norfolk Cares

Assistance Center

Hours: Mon—Fri, 9AM-5PM

(757) 664-6510

For Emergency Call 911

Our Community Officer:

Officer Charles Dreer

Cell-757-353-1268

Charles.dreer@norfolk.gov

If you can't make it to the May 11 meeting, consider attending via Zoom

If you can't be physically present for the May 11 general membership meeting, but you really want to hear about the city's budget priorities, you have an option open to you. You can attend via Zoom! Just visit the Zoom page on our website at <https://eastsidecivicleague.org/zoom-meetings/>.

2026 Board of Officers

President: Edith Lizalde

riverforrestcivicleague@gmail.com

1st Vice President: Kathy O'Hara

keo12588@gmail.com (757) 620-3304

2nd Vice President: Liz Albert

albertfamilyva@aol.com (757) 681-0131

Corresponding Secretary: Sunita Malik

binni73@gmail.com (757) 724-7500

Recording Secretary: Open Position

Treasurer: KK German

kkgerman@gmail.com (757) 714-2335

Trustee: Dustin Wallace

dustin_l-wallace@yahoo.com (210) 843-5059

First Vice Trustee: Garrett Beaver

garrettbeaver24@gmail.com

Second Vice Trustee: Maravia Reid

reidx2@cox.net



Hello Neighbor

I'M THE TOP AGENT TO
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Our Neighborhood

Whether you need to sell your home, need some real estate advice, or simply want to unwind and have good conversation, I've got you covered. Let's meet up and uncover the true value of our amazing community. Cheers to your lively and vibrant neighborhood!

-Karen Davis

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WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE TO ADDRESS BUDGETARY INEQUITIES

As soon as the civic league board analyzed this unacceptable budget we jumped into action:

1. We helped reconvene the Equity for the Eastside Coalition. This coalition is comprised of eastside civic leagues that have reached their limit with the neglect of our area. Representatives from these civic leagues have leaned into the plow with us - Elizabeth Park, Hollywood Maple Hall Homes, Ingleside, Lake Taylor, Newtowne South, Poplar Halls and Stonebridge Crossing.
2. Representatives from our civic league and others addressed our concerns at City Council's April 8 budget hearing. We wore black to signal we were in mourning over a budget proposal that is simply unfair.
3. The Equity for the Eastside Coalition scheduled problem-solving meetings with our City Council representatives - Carlos Clanton of Superward 7 and JP Paige of Ward 4.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Councilmen Paige and Clanton listened closely to our concerns and advised us there are plans to restore the funding for the Eastside Recreation Center-Library. The standing of Military Circle redevelopment is far less clear though. We were advised that the retailer Ross Dress for Less has a long-term lease at Military Circle and the terms of that lease are holding up redevelopment. Local media has reported that the retailer wants \$16 million to relocate. Our Council representatives told us the city is not willing to pay at that level. Nonetheless, at least some demolition will take place on the property, most likely in May. However, timing remains a concern for us. MacArthur Center redevelopment has a five-year timeline in the current proposal. When real planning and actual construction can start at Military Circle remains a mystery.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

City Council is scheduled to adopt its proposed operating and capital budgets on Tuesday, May 12. ***We need to have a large presence there to signal we expect not only for funding to be restored for the Eastside Recreation Center-Library and school maintenance, but also that Military Circle redevelopment will be expedited beyond what is happening now. Please join us in City Council Chambers (on the 11th floor of the City Hall building) at 6 p.m. Wear green as a signal that Council needs to "show us the money!"***

If you can't attend, please consider, between now and May 12, emailing City Council to express your support of this position. The address for the entire City Council is ccouncil@norfolk.gov.



City Councilman Carlos Clanton, Superward 7, met with the Coalition to hear concerns. He also shared city funding challenges with the group.



The city's CIP budget has resulted in the reactivation of the Equity for the Eastside Coalition.



President's Corner:
Where is the Eastside in Norfolk's vision?
Edith Lizalde, President

On Sunday, April 19, *The Virginian-Pilot* printed this editorial that I submitted on behalf of our community. We are re-printing it here as we realize some of our residents are not subscribers.

Column: Norfolk's proposed capital plan ignores Eastside needs
Edith Lizalde, Guest Columnist

I moved to River Forrest Shores in 2022. My family chose it deliberately because it's a quiet, stable riverside community on the east side of a city we intended to call home. We believed in Norfolk. We still do. But this city's proposed budget is making it very hard to believe that Norfolk believes in us.

At the April 8 budget public hearing at Granby High School, approximately 20 of my neighbors and fellow east side civic league leaders attended, dressed in black. We were in mourning — not for a person, but for a broken promise. In his April 2025 State of the City address, Mayor Kenny Alexander promised east side residents a state-of-the-art recreation center and library to anchor redevelopment of Military Circle. The accepted FY26 budget included \$1 million for planning, promised for the FY27 budget. So imagine our alarm when the city manager's proposed FY 2027-31 capital improvement plan contained not one dollar for the project — not for design, not for construction, not for the future. The funding was simply deleted.

Meanwhile, the proposed CIP includes \$72 million over five years for the redevelopment of the MacArthur Center, located downtown.

Our civic league has analyzed Norfolk's five-year CIP every year since FY2023. The pattern is consistent, and this year it is worse than ever: 62.4% of geographically named projects in the proposed CIP are concentrated in the downtown and west side corridor. Some projects (34.3%) are not designated with a location — merely identified as "citywide." Undoubtedly additional downtown/west side projects are included in this category. So really 62.4% is a low ball number. All other areas account for just 3.3%. We call it "Downtown Tunnel Vision." The \$2.5 million Westminster Avenue reconstruction is on the east side, and we welcome it, but a road does not replace a library, a recreation center, or Military Circle.

East side residents are not asking for charity. We are taxpayers. Property assessments have risen sharply with one of my board members paying more than \$500 more this year than she did in 2024. We are contributing more to this city than ever, yet the JANAF branch — the nearest library to most east side residents, opened in 1966 — has never been replaced or significantly updated. We have no true recreation center, and none of our schools are scheduled for renovation.

Military Circle, a 50-plus-acre site the city itself now owns, sits as a wasteland at the gateway to our neighborhoods. It has been studied, promised, proposed and abandoned for years. Three private development proposals were submitted, and none were chosen through a proper process. When residents raised this at the April 8 hearing, the mayor told a reporter, "The commitment is there. The momentum has not dwindled." Words are not momentum. Dollars are momentum.

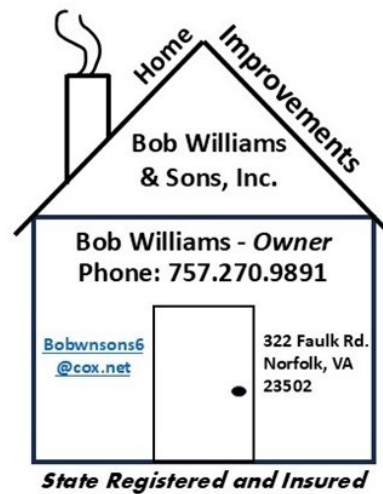
Years ago, three east side civic leagues formed an Equity for the Eastside Coalition. We met with the mayor and city manager, received assurances, and disbanded. That was a mistake. The coalition has been reconvened and is now larger. At the April 8 hearing, representatives from five east side civic leagues spoke in one unified voice. Our Ward 4 and Superward 7 city council members have agreed to meet with us soon. If this budget passes in May without meaningful east side investment, we will not go quietly.

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Share a snack and good conversation at next civic league meeting

The civic league is asking members to consider bringing a snack to the next civic league meeting (Monday, May 11) to share with neighbors. This meeting will feature Cecilia Ward, a library associate with the Norfolk Public Library system. Our social time is a great way to catch up with longtime friends and to make new friends. And that's always easier and more fun when you do it over food!



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**If you haven't joined or renewed yet we ask you to ask yourselves:
*What would happen if this community didn't have a civic league?***

At this writing this is where the River Forrest Shores/ Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League stands with the membership drive that kicked off in April \$276 short of meeting our \$1400 budgetary goal.

First and foremost, your civic league board wants to thank all renewing members, new members and donors for your confidence in this organization. You are the reason we can keep operating!

As volunteers, we work hard to support the needs of our community on both the micro and macro levels, from helping host neighborhood playground playdates to lobbying Norfolk City Council and city administrative leadership to invest more money in the eastside of this city. So, if you haven't joined or renewed yet, please think of all the benefits this civic league offers you for a minimal investment. We publish a newsletter or a flyer each month for 10 months, with July and August being the only exceptions; host a neighborhood Facebook page so residents can more readily connect; conduct regular trash pick-ups; and host quality special events including an annual fall picnic, Christmas party, and ice cream social.

This civic league is the oldest continuously operating civic league in the City of Norfolk. We are the spark plug that has galvanized other eastside civic leagues to work with us to affect change in our area. We follow the actions of City Council and the School Board which affect you and keep you updated. In fact, if you aren't a member of the email list we use to deliver fast-breaking news, let our treasurer KK German know at kkgerman@gmail.com and we will add you expediently, whether you choose to be a member or not.

Please stand with us, so we can continue to stand in the gap on your behalf. You can now pay your dues online via this page on our website: <https://eastsidecivicleague.org/membership/> or contact any of the board members listed on page 02 of this newsletter and we will be glad to arrange to pick up your dues.

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River Forrest Shores / Wayside Manor / Easton Place Civic League General Membership Meeting Minutes-March 9, 2026

President Edith Lizalde called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and led those attending in the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Community Police Report: Officer Charles Dreer provided the monthly safety update and reported that no significant crime trends were recorded within the civic league boundaries during the previous month. He reminded residents to secure vehicles and report suspicious activity.

Guest Speaker: Charles Meek from the City of Norfolk's Budget and Planning Office delivered the evening's presentation. Mr. Meek explained how the city's budgeting and planning processes work and discussed how these efforts influence development, infrastructure, and services across Norfolk neighborhoods. He emphasized the importance of civic engagement and noted that feedback from residents and civic leagues helps inform planning decisions. During the question-and-answer session, residents asked questions about city budgeting priorities, planning initiatives, and how neighborhoods can stay informed about decisions affecting their communities. Mr. Meek encouraged continued participation in civic meetings and neighborhood discussions.

Recognition: President Lizalde recognized Suzanne Duncan for her service as the civic league's former Recording Secretary and thanked her for her contributions to the organization.

Membership Drive: Second Vice President Liz Albert invited residents to volunteer to assist with the upcoming membership drive and encouraged neighbors to help support outreach efforts.

Business: First Vice President Kathy O'Hara introduced a proposed amendment to the civic league bylaws regarding publication of meeting minutes. The proposal would allow minutes to be published either in the newsletter or on the civic league website. In accordance with the bylaws amendment process, the amendment will lay over for one month and will be brought to a vote at the April meeting.

Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting and was approved by voice vote.

School maintenance is being under-funded in this city; consider speaking up on behalf of the children

The City of Norfolk's capital improvement plan (CIP) budget proposal for FY-27 recommends \$8 million in school maintenance funding for more than 40 schools. This proposed allocation is a drastic reduction to the School Board's \$17 million request.

To underscore the sheer inadequacy of allocating only \$8 million for school maintenance, consider this fact: It cost \$7.3 million to replace the roof at one school - Booker T. Washington High School. Meanwhile the proposed CIP allocates \$76,000 to renovate Chrysler Hall. So essentially, a facility that hosts special events takes priority over school maintenance.

To add insult to injury, so to speak, the \$8 million allocated for school renovation comes from school reversion funds. Reversion funds are school monies left unspent at the end of the year. Under Virginia law these funds revert back to a city or county. A locality can then choose to give school money back to the schools. That is how the school maintenance line item in this CIP proposal is being handled. City Council is letting Norfolk Public Schools have its money back. So essentially not a dollar of new city money is going towards school maintenance.

(Continued on page 11)

Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Christy Siepert

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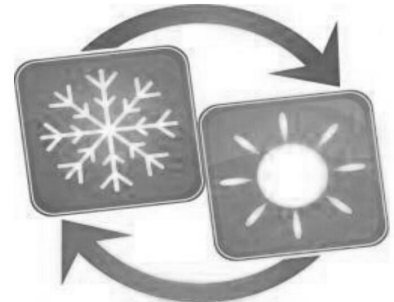
Sunday School: 9:45am

Worship Service: 11:00am

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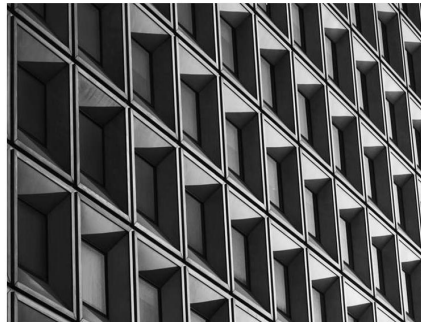
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(Continued from page 5)

We are asking City Council to do three things before the May 12 vote: Restore funding for the Eastside Recreation Center with a construction timeline within five years; allocate real dollars for Military Circle redevelopment; and commit to a capital improvement process that treats every part of this city with equal urgency.

We are not asking for more. We are asking for equality.

Edith Lizalde of Norfolk, a Navy veteran and a Marine Corps spouse, is president of the River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/ Easton Place Civic League and a member of the recently reconvened Equity for the Eastside Coalition.



Military Circle opened in 1970 and closed in January 2023.

(Continued from page 8)

This inadequate funding level compounds an already pressing problem for a school division with many aging schools. A typical school in this city generally falls in the range of 45-55 years old (with some being older and some younger). A consultant has rated all Norfolk schools with a Facility Condition Index score (FCI). An FCI rates the overall condition of a building. The higher the score the worst shape the building is in with a score of .600 or higher deemed unacceptable." Even with the planned closure/consolidation of 12 schools from September 2026 through 2032, 17 are listed as "unacceptable" and 12 more buildings have a score greater than .500. The consultant has estimated the price tag of bringing the remaining schools into "good" condition at \$650 million.

If you are the parent or grandparent of a Norfolk Public School student or a supporter of public education in general please consider asking the City Council to fully fund the School Board's \$17 million request. The email address for City Council is ccouncil@norfolk.gov

Meeting Minutes Now Available Online

At the April 13, 2026 general membership meeting, residents approved an amendment to our bylaws allowing meeting minutes to be published online when space in the newsletter is limited. Members and neighbors can now view the full meeting minutes anytime on our website: <https://eastsidecivicleague.org/meeting-minutes/>

Minutes will continue to be included in the newsletter whenever space allows, but this update ensures our community stays informed and has consistent access to important information.

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River Forrest Shores 2026 Home Value Update

What Your Neighbors' Homes Are Actually Selling For

Neighborhood Snapshot:

- ✓ Price Range: \$167K – \$509K
- ✓ Typical Home: 3–4 Beds | ~1,500–2,000 SqFt
- ✓ Avg Time to Sell: ~ 30 Days when priced right
- ✓ Market: Low inventory, but shifting — preparation and pricing are critical

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