



# EASTSIDE EXPRESS

September &

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## An Intro to AI from a Neighborhood Tech Guy: September 14 meeting topic

After a 2-month summer break, the RFS/WM/EP Civic League is resuming its monthly meetings on Monday, September 14 at 7 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Rahul Malik, whose presentation, titled ***"An Intro to AI from a Neighborhood Tech Guy,"*** will help us all better understand how to harness the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in our daily lives.

If you are just getting started using AI or are planning to, you won't want to miss this presentation. Even if you are already a dedicated user, this will be your chance to talk to an expert who can offer suggestions on how you can take use of this resource to the next level.

A resident of Easton Place, Rahul has more than five years of experience in systems engineering and cloud architecture. He specializes in building the foundational technology that powers modern digital ecosystems. From managing critical enterprise networks and high performance computing clusters as a systems engineer at Old Dominion University to his current

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Rahul Malik

## Possible new residential project at Military Highway and Corporate Boulevard

Recently the Elizabeth Park Civic League contacted our civic league to advise us of a project that affects their neighborhood and by proximity could affect ours. The city requires developers to notify civic leagues for new projects if the proposed development is within 1,000 feet of the civic leagues' boundaries. Our civic league was not notified because our neighborhoods fall outside of that zoning requirement. Therefore, only Elizabeth Park and Woodbine civic league were advised.

However, a representative from the RSF/WM/EP Civic League attended a special meeting the Elizabeth Park Civic League held for its residents. Our aim was to hear firsthand from the developer what the new project could entail and to report back to our residents.

This is what we learned:

- The developer is Joe Laframboise and the property involved is an existing building located at Military Highway and 5600 Corporate Boulevard. The developer has not purchased the property yet. He is doing due diligence before he proceeds with purchase.
- Preliminary plans are to renovate and adapt the building for independent senior housing. There would be 66 residential units - most likely an equal number of one and two bedroom units. Rents were projected to begin at around \$4,000 monthly.

(Continued on page 2)

### Recycle Dates

Sept. 14th & 28th

Oct. 13th & 26th

Street Sweeping:

Sept. 25th & Oct. 23rd

### 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](http://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.

### September Meeting

**Will be held in the social hall at Aldersgate United Methodist Church on Sept. 14th, at 7:00 p.m.**

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- An additional building would be built on the property to house a swimming pool, kitchen and a cafe. Pickle ball courts would also be developed on the property.
- To make this project happen, the developer must ask City Council to change the zoning so it so it allows residential housing onsite.
- Mr. Laframboise was asked about other projects he has developed. He pointed to the renovation of the old Spicer building at the corner of Princess Anne Road and Monticello Avenue. This was also an adaptive reuse project that resulted in a commercial building being developed into apartments.
- Elizabeth Park Civic League President Christine Smith expressed concerns that the rezoning could result in more residential housing being built on the property. She noted additional density could affect traffic in the neighborhood and property values. Mr. Laframboise noted he did not have plans at this point to expand or subdivide the property, but he did not rule out such activity for the future. He pointed out the current zoning allows for other uses which could result in similar concerns. Examples he cited included a large commercial distribution center (such as Amazon) or a hotel.

The Elizabeth Park Civic League will eventually take a vote on whether or not to support the developer's rezoning application.

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### **Hold the date: Saturday, Oct. 3 for the Harry Jones Annual Picnic**



The River Forrest Shores/Wayside Manor/Easton Place Civic League, in cooperation with local churches, will host the annual Harry Jones Fall Picnic on Saturday, Oct, 3 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. on the

grounds of Riverside Baptist Church.

So put this event on your calendars now! It always offers an opportunity for neighbors to relax and have some fun. Planned festivities include a corn hole tournament, a bounce house and an antique car show. As we get closer to the event we will share more details.

As a reminder, our picnic is named after former president and civic leader Harry Jones who passed away in September 2022. We trust he will be with us in spirit on Oct. 3!

### **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**

### **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

### **Meeting Minutes Now Available Online**

Meeting minutes are now accessible anytime on our website: <https://eastsidecivicleague.org/meeting-minutes/>. While minutes will still appear in the newsletter when space allows, posting them online ensures everyone can stay informed and easily review important updates.



Chris Graves, left, Bill Bunch and Mary Barrett were three of the eight people who cleaned up our community last month.

## Can We Talk Trash With Our Neighbors?

As most residents are aware, the civic league has a neighborhood clean-up crew that regularly picks up trash at the Military Gardens entrance, portions of the Military Highway feeder road and Sellger Drive, and alongside the Newtown Road light rail station on Curlew Drive. Thankfully, eight hardworking volunteers recently showed up for the last pickup which resulted in 11 bags of trash as well as items that didn't neatly fit into a bag.

Many thanks to these folks: Bill Bunch (the crew leader), Mary Barrett, Millie Coward, Chris Graves, Kathy O'Hara, Cathy Sherrill and Bruce and Jeri Zurbuchen! Also hats off to KK German who supports the team administratively by serving as the contact for the City of Norfolk's Keep Norfolk Beautiful (KNB) effort. KNB maintains records on community clean-ups. KK is currently working on the possibility of getting signage that would underscore the penalties for throwing out trash on public streets and property. This is a goal because unfortunately those team members who have been involved in clean-ups over a number of years say our level of trash has increased significantly over the years.

If you would like to consider joining this team, contact Bill at 757-323-3661 or KK at 757-714-2335. Volunteers are provided grabbers, trash bags and safety vests.



# Hello Neighbor

**I'M THE TOP AGENT TO  
REACH OUT TO IN**

## 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*

REALTOR®, CDPE, CIAS, ASP

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## Volunteer/Neighbor Spotlight: Mark and Marlene Bender of Easton Place

There are many attributes that make a neighborhood a lovely place to live, from a convenient location to tree-shaded lots. However, the absolute best hallmark is having good neighbors around you. This regular column in ***The Eastside Express*** is meant to spotlight our community's volunteers and all-around good neighbors. In this edition, we celebrate the contributions of Mark and Marlene Bender of Ivor Avenue in Easton Place.

The Benders were nominated by Sunita Malik, the civic league's corresponding secretary. Sunita also lives on Ivor Avenue so she sees firsthand the good work of this couple. "Mark and Marlene watch for their neighbors and they care about this community. It isn't unusual to see them out and about cleaning up in Easton Place," noted Sunita.

The Benders moved to Easton Place in 1991. Originally from the Pittsburgh area, they moved here for Mark's job. He is the pastor of Calvary Presbyterian Church on Kempsville Road. So, it is no surprise that their personal mission involves making their corner of the world a better place to be. Most Saturday mornings will find them collecting litter on Ivor Avenue, Edison Avenue, part of the Madison Alternative School lot and a portion of Newtown Road. Marlene gives credit to neighbor Clara Allen for inspiring them as Clara, who is an octogenarian, has long been an Easton Place clean-up artist.

Marlene says her 5-year-old grandson Rylan loves being part of the trash pick-up team with his grandparents. Whenever he visits, he is ready to get to work! Obviously, his grandparents have helped instill the spirit of good citizenship in Rylan.

When asked about their penchant for neighborliness that Sunita described, Marlene was humble about hers and Mark's contributions, but when prodded a little she said they try to help out where they can, especially for older neighbors. It is not uncommon to find Mark cutting a neighbor's grass or putting out trash and recycling cans. If someone is sick or injured the Benders are there for them.

So, hats off to the Benders for their willingness to lend a hand! That's what being a good neighbor is all about.



We are pleased to recognize Mark and Marlene Bender in this neighborhood/volunteer spotlight article. The couple is known in Easton Place for always being willing to lend a helping hand. Their grandson Rylan is following in their footsteps!

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## Looking down the road at other important dates

For our residents' long-range planning, the civic league would like to make you aware of dates when important subjects will be addressed. The details are:

### **Monday, Oct. 12 — Ward 4 School Board Candidate Forum**

We will host a candidate forum for the Ward 4 School Board seat on the November ballot. The two qualifying candidates are Tiffany Moore-Buffaloe, the incumbent, and challenger Candiase Driver, principal of P.B. Young Elementary School. Improvement of Norfolk Public Schools remains an important community priority so it is important we hear the candidates' objectives. This meeting will take place at our usual place and time: Aldersgate United Methodist Church at 7 p.m.

### **Monday, Nov. 9 — Military Circle Redevelopment Update**

Norfolk Director of Economic Development Sean Washington will provide a progress report on the Military Circle redevelopment. It is important we remain vocal about our expectations for quality redevelopment beginning soon.

## **River Forrest Shores / Wayside Manor / Easton Place Civic League Meeting Minutes - May 11, 2026**

President Edith Lizalde called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and welcomed neighbors attending both in person and via Zoom. She noted that the meeting was being recorded for record-keeping purposes and for later sharing with the community. President Lizalde then led those attending in the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Guest Speaker — Cecilia Ward, Norfolk Public Library Community Engagement Office**

Ms. Ward, who serves as a library associate and volunteer coordinator for the Norfolk Public Library system, provided a detailed presentation highlighting upcoming summer programming, library resources, volunteer opportunities, and educational initiatives available throughout Norfolk libraries. Ms. Ward began by reviewing the branches serving Eastside residents, including the Jordan Newby Anchor Branch Library, Richard A. Tucker Memorial Library, and the Janaf Branch Library, while also highlighting the broader Norfolk Public Library system and its many neighborhood and anchor branches across the city. The presentation focused heavily on summer programming opportunities for children, teens, and adults. Ms. Ward discussed Norfolk Public Library's designation as a "Family Place Library" system, explaining that many youth programs are intentionally designed to support literacy, early childhood learning, STEM education, and social development. Programs highlighted included: Baby Garden, Toddler Time, Build Bash, "Tales to Tails" therapy dog reading sessions, Teen-focused crafting and hobby programs, and eMedia kits for sewing, music mixing, sculpting, and video editing. Ms. Ward also discussed a variety of adult programs offered throughout the system, including: Tai Chi classes at the Richard A. Tucker Memorial Library, adult arts and crafts programming, technology assistance and computer literacy classes, credit and financial literacy workshops, Juneteenth programming, Pride Month events, and a Black Business Brunch and Expo supporting local entrepreneurs. A significant portion of the presentation focused on the library system's annual **Summer Reading Program**, which Ms. Ward described as the library's "Super Bowl." Residents learned about the "Beanstack" reading platform, where participants track reading minutes throughout the summer to earn prizes and incentives. Ms. Ward emphasized that the program encourages literacy in all forms and explained that reading materials ranging from novels to recipes and informational articles can count toward participation goals. Weekly prizes for adults and children would be awarded throughout the summer, including educational kits, cooking items, LEGO sets, and themed prizes at participating branches. She also highlighted Norfolk Public Library's partnership programs providing: Free meals for youth ages 0–17 at participating branches and free books for children during the summer months. Ms. Ward noted that these efforts are designed not only to encourage literacy, but also to help address food insecurity for children who rely on school meal programs during the academic year.

**Community Police Report:** Officer Charles Dreer provided the monthly community safety update following the library presentation. Residents discussed ongoing speeding concerns and unsafe operation of motorized bikes and scooters within the neighborhood. Officer Dreer encouraged residents to continue reporting incidents through both 911 and the non-emergency police number so officers can better track patterns and direct enforcement efforts appropriately. He emphasized that community reporting is critical in helping law enforcement address recurring neighborhood concerns. Additional discussion focused on traffic safety, speeding complaints, and youth riding motorized vehicles without helmets throughout the neighborhood.

**Business and Announcements:** President Lizalde provided updates regarding ongoing civic league initiatives and continued Eastside advocacy efforts related to recreation, wellness, and equitable investment in the community.

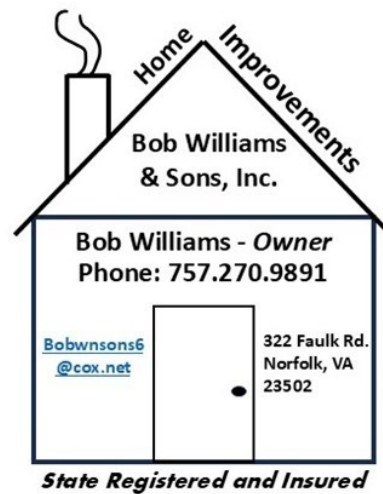
Second Vice President Liz Albert then provided an update on the civic league's ongoing membership drive. Residents were encouraged to renew memberships and continue supporting the civic league's efforts to strengthen neighborhood engagement and communication. Ms. Albert also encouraged volunteers to assist with outreach efforts and emphasized the importance of maintaining strong participation from all three neighborhoods. Additional announcements included reminders about upcoming civic league meetings, continued engagement with city leadership regarding Eastside priorities, and opportunities for residents to remain involved in neighborhood advocacy efforts. At the conclusion of the meeting, residents were encouraged to attend the upcoming Norfolk City Council meeting being held the following evening and to wear green in support of continued Eastside advocacy efforts and investment priorities. Neighbors were thanked for their continued participation and support of the civic league's work throughout the community.

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



**Because everything is nicer when food is involved!**

Our civic league meetings are resuming after a two-month summer hiatus. The next meeting is Sept. 14 when we will host Rahul Malik, a neighbor and technology professional who will walk us through the ins and outs of effective Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage. As usual, after the meeting we will have a social time. Consequently, we are asking members to consider bringing a snack to that meeting. 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!



I have a lot of happy customers in the 'hood.

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**Bobwnsons6@cox.net**

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(Continued from page 1)

role as an infrastructure architect at industry leader MAP Communications, his career has focused on scaling complex environments and driving technological innovation.

Passionate about making cutting-edge technology accessible, resilient, and secure for everyday users, Rahul also mentors local youth intent on pursuing careers in information technology. When he isn't architecting the systems behind next-generation software and servers, you can find him practicing his swing on the golf course.

#### ***In other action***

Following Rahul's presentation, Lisa Murphy, an attorney representing Verizon Wireless and Vertical Bridge, will give a 5-minute overview of the businesses' application with the City of Norfolk for the installation of a new telecommunications tower. The planned tower would be located adjacent to I-64 on property owned by Coastal Virginia Church located at 301 S. Newtown Road. We are providing her the courtesy of a short briefing as this is a project that may be of particular interest to residents in

#### **Join our civic league's Facebook conversation**

By now you know that a lot happens in our three neighborhoods. It's a benefit to have a news source and the civic league Facebook page serves that purpose. If you haven't joined the conversation yet, consider doing so now.

Here's a little of what's been posted on that page in recent weeks: several notifications on back-to-school events such as giveaways for new shoes and school supplies and even a public health day offering vaccinations for school entrance and sports physicals for Norfolk students; development projects; a city-sponsored open house on lighting improvements; and a job opening at a local church's daycare facility.

If you want to take part in the conversation, visit our page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RFSCivicLeague> and ask to join.

## **Quick Serve Food Store**

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## President's Corner: A New Season That Needs You

As we head into a new season of civic league meetings and activities, it's important to remember that our strength comes from neighbors who choose to get involved. Over the summer, your Board has continued working with city officials, tracking developments that affect our community, and advocating for investments in Eastside Norfolk—from the future of Military Circle to recreational spaces like a playground for our young families.

But we can't do it alone. This fall brings membership events, cleanups, city discussions, and conversations about our community's future. These efforts succeed when neighbors show up and lend a hand.

Whether you can spare an hour, help distribute newsletters, join a cleanup, welcome new residents, attend a meeting, or share your ideas—your participation matters. No expertise required; just come learn what's happening and see where you might fit in.

River Forrest Shores, Wayside Manor, and Easton Place have always been defined by neighbors supporting one another. That spirit is what keeps our community strong.

So as we begin a new season, I'm asking you to take one step: be part of it. Attend a meeting. Volunteer. Bring a neighbor. Share an idea. Pick up a piece of trash. Speak up when something needs attention.

The Board will continue doing our part. I hope you'll consider doing yours. I look forward to seeing many of you this fall.

With appreciation,

Edith Lizalde President, RFS/WM/EP Civic League

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## A message to our community from the Janaf Branch Library

The Janaf Branch Library would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Eastside Norfolk community for your continued support and engagement. Your involvement reflects the mission of the Norfolk Public Library: to offer equal opportunity access to information, high-quality materials, enriching programs, online resources, and technology that support lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and intellectual stimulation for all.

We want to remind our Eastside neighbors that you have a Norfolk Public Library branch in your own community, supported by welcoming spaces and knowledgeable staff dedicated to excellent service and civility. We encourage you to make full use of your neighborhood branch's resources. Find us in the Janaf Shopping Center. Follow the sidewalk through section D or drive around back. We are located right next to the Janaf Office Building, and we do have our own parking area if you drive around behind the shopping center.

We invite you to explore everything Janaf Library offers, including our selection of fiction and nonfiction books, newspapers, magazines, physical audiobooks, and DVDs. We also provide computers, free internet access, eBooks, digital audiobooks, and many online resources for everything from homework help to digital comic books, and we have friendly, expert staff ready to assist you in using these exceptional resources. Everything your library offers is free.

Weekly programs continue throughout the season. For those with young children, Babygarten meets Thursdays from 10:30 -11:30 a.m. and introduces infants to rhythm, books, and play that build early literacy skills. KinderSTEM meets Wednesday mornings from 10:30-11:30 a.m. and again Wednesday afternoons from 4- 5 p.m., offering hands-on learning for ages three to five to help prepare preschoolers for kindergarten through activities focused on letters, counting, sorting, listening skills, and more.

Additional programs include Lego Club on Mondays from 4-5 p.m. and the Teen Advisory Board on the first Tuesday of every month, also from 4-5 p.m. This gives teens a voice in shaping future library offerings. Pick up an Event Guide from any Norfolk Public Library location or find Janaf programs at <https://norfolk.libcal.com/calendars> or on the Norfolk Public Library website. Keep an eye out for our changing slate of programs. There is something for everyone.

Our branch is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thank you again to the Eastside Norfolk community. We look forward to welcoming you to Janaf Library and continuing to build library spaces where everyone feels valued, supported, and inspired.

Zachary Dearman-Paron, *M.S.L.I.S. Branch Manager*

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Christy Siepert

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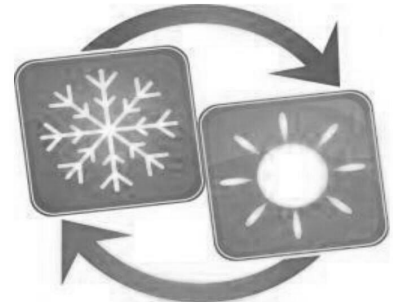
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Check out our 2026 sales in River Forrest Shores:



244 E McGinnis Cir  
Sold: \$475,000



248 E. McGinnis Cir  
Sold: \$425,000



110 Lydia Ave  
Sold: \$295,000



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## New projected slated for the Barry Robinson Center

The civic league works to keep up with development projects in our area. The Barry Robinson Center, located on Kempsville Road near north Easton Place, has a new project in the works.

This project involves the design and eventual construction of a training center that will provide a classroom, library, office and meeting rooms. Since this project is located on the campus area, it is not anticipated it will have a large impact on north Easton Place. However, those who have questions can call the architect, Jacob Combee of Archsmith Studio at 804-516-9100.

## If you can't make it to the September 14 meeting, consider attending via Zoom

If you can't be physically present for the September 14 general membership meeting, but you want to hear about how to harness AI, 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/>.

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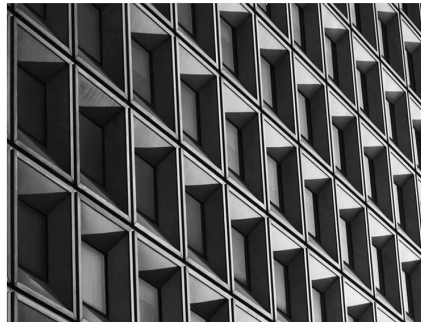
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