



## WARDS CORNER CIVIC LEAGUE

# CROSSROADS

Serving: Colony Point, Hariton Gardens, Merridale,  
Pinehurst, Restmere, Rose Gardens, Sussex of Norfolk,  
Virginia Gardens and Wexford Terrace

April 2007

Web site [www.Wardscorner.com](http://www.Wardscorner.com)

### CIVIC LEAGUE MEETING MONDAY

April 16, 2007

6:45 PM

NORFOLK FITNESS and WELLNESS  
CENTER

#### Agenda

DAVID FREEMAN  
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION  
CODES ENFORCEMENT

President's message

By Jim English [ajim.english@gmail.com](mailto:ajim.english@gmail.com)

We are at the beginning of spring and that brings with it warmer days, tree buds popping (and spring allergies), azaleas budding and blooming along with many other colorful flowers and plants. Now is the time we all are trying to get our yards and houses in shape for the seasonal activities. The one thing that has always attracted me to our neighborhood is how great we as residents and property owners do in keeping up our properties. This has been, continues to be and always will be one of the best and greatest neighborhoods in the city of Norfolk. I am always proud and glad when I return from wherever I have been to be home again in my Wards Corner neighborhood. We all must endeavor to keep our neighborhood this way despite the negative pressures being place on the entire area by the blight that continues to persist to the east of us on Little Creek Road and in the business district.

The Virginia General Assembly has seen fit to rewrite the rules on eminent domain in this year's session. Shame on them!! That will prevent the city from redeveloping the blighted area between the Wards Corner Business District and the Southern Shopping Center in a way that it has done so citywide using the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authorities programs. But we must not give up. Constant pressure needs to be placed on the city council, our State Delegates and Senators to the General Assembly and, yes, even our congressional representatives to deal with this blight. If the city can buy and give money in the millions of dollars to developers downtown, then they can see fit to send a little our way to help with the redevelopment by developers in our needed areas. Purchase of the northeast corner of the business district would be a good place to start as it is a blighted eyesore. Who would want to relocate a business here

with that neglected blighted eyesore staring them in the face? Obviously the owner of the property doesn't care about the negative effect their property is placing on the whole area. The same is true for the crime-ridden apartments and property areas on East Little Creek Road near the business district. Our message needs to be consistent; we are tired of the city not effectively dealing with these nuisances. It had been said by a council member that we can do more code enforcement and police presence in the area. This is a BANDAID approach and will not lead to redevelopment. Money will!! There comes a time in an area when the community's collective rights outweigh the rights of an individual property owner when their behavior impacts negatively the rights of the group. Unfortunately, the lack of foresight (a somewhat kinder description of what I really should say) of the members of the Virginia General Assembly, failed to recognize this difference. We are now at that point and our community rights must prevail over slumlords that own property in our area. This continued deteriorating situation cannot and will not be tolerated.

So what can be done and what can you do. For several years many of us have been working with the Greater Wards Corner Partnership and its working group the Wards Corner Task Force. We have accomplished much in that time period and will continue to work in the future to improve the area despite this latest significant setback. However, since the voices of many carry a greater influence with our elected officials, I am asking that each of you consider becoming a part of these groups. The Greater Wards Corner Partnership meets the third Saturday of every month at 8:30 AM at the Wellness Center. We share a potluck breakfast and discuss the issues relative to all of the citizens in the Greater Wards Corner Partnership area. Occasionally, our elected officials join us. Councilwoman Theresa Whibley has been to our last several meetings and is genuinely interested in helping us along with Councilmen Winn and Williams. The Wards Corner Task Force meets the second Thursday of every month at 8:30 AM at the Wellness Center. This working group of the Partnership meets with our city council representatives and city staffers to put into place our recommendations to help make improvements to the area. We are in need of more citizen representatives for each group to help us improve the entire area. Please consider coming to one or both of these meetings in addition to our regular civic league meetings the third Monday of every month at 7PM at the Wellness Center. The more of us there, the better and stronger our message.

Finally, I should point out that some of the leadership has recently changed in the Task Force. Brad Robinson, who has led the Business Association for many years, has resigned and he has been replaced by Elyse Kalfus as its new President who will now represent that group on the Task Force. Les

Demmin has also asked for a replacement as Chair of the Infrastructure Committee. Les has been a mighty force with that group and can be credited with many of the city infrastructure improvements (i.e., the traffic light at W. Little Creek Rd and Ruthven; the replacement of many broken or damaged power poles along W. Little Creek Rd. to name only two). He is a member of the Wards Corner Civic League and is always prepared to share his group's updates with us at our meetings. He will be indeed be missed in that role but has indicated that he will remain a member of that committee. We thank him for that. We also thank him for his dedication and tireless efforts in helping to make the recommended improvements known to the city and his follow through of those recommendations to realization. Thanks Les!! Replacing him as Co-Chair will be Ada Blair of Bolling Brook and Pearl Wendell of Suburban Park. Yes, it took two people to replace him. Let's hope they as two can do as good a job as Les did as one.

Thanks and see you at the next meetings! Jim

**CHEERS TO THE ADOPT-A-SPOT CLEAN-UP CREW!!**

*We want to thank the following people for their participation in the Great American Cleanup at our Adopt-a-Spot on the corner of Ruthven Avenue & W. Little Creek Road on March 24: Peggy Donovan, Brian Emrick, Ray & Betty Duron, Valerie VanDeVenter, Troy VanZummeren, Diane Dubay, and Jim Pressler. The event was a Big Success with 21 bags of trash collected plus other debris too large to bag. That translates into 570 pounds of TRASH!!!!*

**Important Phone Numbers**

Police Emergency	911
Police Non-Emergency	441-5610
Pace Officer	664-6921
Police Red Sector	664-6914
Code Enforcement	664-6532
Environmental Health	683-2712
Sewer Backup	823-1000
Waste Management (Call here for large pickups)	441-5813
Norfolk Cares Call Center (Don't know what office to call on the problem?)	664-6510

**Did You Know?** *Someone called the Cares Call Center line, and as a result, two potholes in our area were fixed. (Ruthven at Meads, and on W. Little Creek ) It pays to take the time to report a problem.*

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Beginning Balance			<u>\$1278.92</u>
+ funds received	\$185.00		
-funds disbursed		\$68.25	
Ending Balance			\$1,395.67

WCCL MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues are \$5.00. Our dues' year runs from January 1 through December 31. If you are a continuing member and you have not renewed your membership for 2007, please submit your payment at a meeting or mail to the Treasurer, Ray Duron, at 530 Sterling Street, 23505. If you haven't joined yet, please consider doing so now.

<p><b>Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Address:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Phone #:</b> _____</p> <p><b>E-mail</b> _____</p>
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[www.wardscorner.com](http://www.wardscorner.com)

**The Wards Corner Civic League Website.**

**If you're looking for Wards Corner news or links to various city services, you can find it on the website.**

**Don't forget to check it out!**

**WCCL Board of Directors**

President	Jim English	423-7154
1 <sup>st</sup> VP/ Membership	Linda Spear	402-8583
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP/ Newsletter Distribution	Lee Goldman	287-1619
Secretary	Joan Griffey	440-9508
Treasurer	Ray Duron	423-4337
Web Master	Martin Thomas, Jr.	618-6468

Newsletter ideas/comments-Barbara Ross  
(Bookworms@WHRO.Net or 489-1024)

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR SECRETARY'S MINUTES

March 19, 2007

Wards Corner Civic League met on Monday, March 19, 2007 at 7 PM in Norfolk Fitness and Wellness Center. President Jim English. opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was well attended.

Our PACE officer, Curtis Jackson, reported promotions in the police department, a commercial robbery at aLantic Bank and NYCity clothing and a homicide/robbery on Harvard St. Radar will be set up on Granby St near the bridge. He answered questions re: parking on lawn on W Little Creek Rd., Sheryl Dr., Rebel Road home invasion, confusing house numbers and vandalism.

Our guest speaker was Sharon McDonald, constitutional officer and 10 yr veteran as Commissioner of the Revenue. As the chief tax assessor for Norfolk, she collects taxes on personal property (vehicle, boat, etc), business licenses, meals, admissions, lodging, bed (hotel), utilities (VA Natural Gas, Dominion Power). The department mans teams in audits, investigation (delinquent tax), state income tax, tax relief programs, and staffs satellite offices in the city. DMV partners with this office for vehicle registration, titling, name change, special plates, voter registration. It does not issue drivers licenses (homeland security). Wards Corner revenue in retail taxes (sales, business, property, real estate) has increased in the past 5 years despite stagnant growth. Mrs. McDonald answered inquiries of home assessments, taxes, and downtown development performance grants.

A brief report was given of the WC Taskforce meeting: Les Demmin has removed himself as Chair of Infrastructure Committee due to health, aLantic Bank will be moving near Wal-Mart, Dollar General is closing, Appearances has relocated, zoning notices will be given for make-shift driveways on W. Little Creek Road, cracked pavement at Maycox Ave. /Granby Street will be repaired, litter pick up will be addressed by Farm Fresh.

A motion to start our meeting at 6:45PM (instead of 7PM) was made because the Center closes at 8:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joan Griffey, Secretary

### UPCOMING EVENTS AND REMINDERS

***Please note that our Civic League has decided to start our monthly meeting at 6:45 PM instead of 7:00 PM. This will give us a little extra time for questions and discussion. The Wellness Center asks us to leave by 8:30 PM.***

## ***Real Estate TAX RELIEF for Senior and Disabled Citizens***

***You could be eligible for real estate tax relief if:***

- *Your are 65 years of age or totally and permanently disabled*
- *You live in and on the property to be exempted*
- *The combined income of owners and all relatives living in home does not exceed \$52,000/year*
- *Your net worth, excluding the home, cannot exceed \$350,000*

*The exemption is granted on an annual basis and a new application must be filed each year. Call 441-1502 to receive an application or visit the website at: [www.norfolk.gov/Revenue](http://www.norfolk.gov/Revenue).*

### **NORFOLK ELECTRONICS RECYCLING DAY**

*Back by popular demand! Keep Norfolk Beautiful is once again coordinating an Electronics Recycling Day- Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Norfolk residents only can drop off their used electronics equipment between 8AM and 4PM at the WHRO parking lot (Hampton Boulevard and 49<sup>th</sup> Street) free of charge. Among the acceptable items are computers, monitors, TV's, printers, VCR's, radios, copy machines, fax machines, phones, answering machines, tape recorders, toasters, microwaves, medical electronics, stereos, surveillance equipment.*

### **PICNIC AT THE PARK**

We're hoping that North Shore park will soon undergo the promised renovation, and it's been suggested that we have a picnic to admire and celebrate. If you're interested, send an e-mail to one of the Board members, or give us a call. If you'd like to help organize it, please let us know.

### **CIVIC LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

*Our civic league has a membership of 103 persons, with eight people who have joined since the first of the year. Fifty two still need to renew their membership, however. If you haven't taken the time to pay this year's dues of \$5, please send your check to our treasurer, Ray Duron. And, if you do belong, ask a neighbor to join.*

*Support your Civic League!!*