



## WARDS CORNER CIVIC LEAGUE

# CROSSROADS

**SERVING: COLONY POINT, HARMON GARDENS, MERRIDALE, PIMMINS,  
RESMERE, ROSE GARDENS, SUSSEX OF NORFOLK, VIRGINIA GARDENS AND  
WEXFORD TERRACE**

**March 2009** Web site [www.Wardscorner.com](http://www.Wardscorner.com)

### **CIVIC LEAGUE MEETING**

**MONDAY**

**March 16, 2009**

**6:45 PM**

**NORFOLK FITNESS and WELLNESS  
CENTER**

#### **Agenda**

**Virginia General Assembly  
Delegation**

**Delegates Paula Miller and Kenny  
Alexander  
Senator Ralph Northam**

#### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

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

Dear Neighbors,

An article sent to me this weekend by Martin Thomas prompted me to write this message to you. The article appeared in the Home section of the Virginia Pilot and was titled "Would-be buyers: Pick area with strong rebound potential" and was written by Ellen James Martin, a real estate writer for the UP syndicate. She sites many things that potential homebuyers should keep in mind and consider before making the decision to buy a home. The one that caught our eye said, "Look for an area where retail centers remain strong. Hollowed out shopping centers, which have lost their anchor stores, bring blight to close by neighborhoods. Then the 'Ma and Pa' stores in the same area soon close as well." This was actually a quote from Sid Davis' book, "A Survival Guide for Buying a Home". What is so disconcerting about this piece in the article is that she describes what is actually happening now in the Wards Corner Business District. Think about it- where are the anchors? They are gone. We are seeing more and more small independently owned businesses close in the area. Blight is definitely settling in around the business district and particularly to the east of that area.

While I try not to be negative in what I write, this article hit the nail on the head about our Greater Wards Corner area. Of course, the biggest culprit in this process of decline is the owner of the shopping center in the Northeast corner of the business district where there are more vacant store fronts than those filled with businesses. This has led, to some extent, an ever growing similar situation throughout the entire business district although not to the extent of the NE corner. When is this going to stop? When are we going to turn the corner on revitalization of the area? When are our elected officials going to get with the program and realize how much real estate tax potential they are losing every day because of the lack of attention to this area by the City except for a few small carrots thrown our way every once in a while. If you are not upset with what you see, you should be. We still have many of the three negative businesses in the area, not to mention the lack of anchor businesses. The big three businesses that always put a negative influence on an area including its neighborhoods are: pawn shops, rent-to-own stores and pay day predatory lenders, the scourge of any retail area. We have all three! Not to mention a couple of very negative influencing establishments that I don't need to mention. You know which ones they are.

We all know that none of this is good for our area. The consultants that developed the comprehensive plan for the Greater Wards Corner Area mentioned them and recommended how the area should be improved. So what's the problem? The lack of political will by our elected officials? Or, our apathy to let it happen? It is probably some of both, with a heavier emphasis on the former rather than the later. Let's not allow this to continue. We all need to speak up about this decline. The city is facing a severe budget shortfall now and continuing for the next couple of years. Let's not allow them to tell us that there is no money for Wards Corner. There is always money available for projects if you scream loud enough to get action, although sometimes I wonder if even that tactic somehow falls on deaf ears. Please get involved, we need your help.

Ok enough of that, you get my point.

Let me talk about doing something positive for the area. In an article posted on Keep America Beautiful,

"a report on new research in the journal *Science*, *The Economist* describes a Dutch study that finds graffiti, vandalism, litter, and other signs of disorder create an environment in which people are more likely to commit crimes. Under real-world conditions, researchers found that this type of environment dampened the impulse to act for the good of the community. These findings tend to support the "broken windows" theory. Dr Kelling's theory takes its name from the observation that a few broken windows in an empty building quickly lead to more smashed panes, more vandalism and eventually to break-ins. The tendency for people to behave in a particular way can be strengthened or weakened depending on what they observe others to be doing. This does not necessarily mean that people will copy bad behavior exactly, reaching for a spray can when they see graffiti. Rather, says Dr Keizer, it can foster the "violation" of other norms of behavior. It was this effect that his experiments, which have just been published in *Science*, set out to test." You can read about the study at [http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=12630201](http://www.economist.com/science/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12630201). It is very interesting.

So let's do something about litter. The Great American Cleanup is just around the corner and is sponsored by Keep America Beautiful (KAB). From March 1 through May 31, Keep America Beautiful will conduct its 24th annual Great American Cleanup™ in communities from coast to coast. There will be 30,000 events taking place in more than 17,000 communities, and if it's anything like last year's event, we are going to remove about 200 million pounds of litter from the landscape and waterways, recycle nearly 22.5 million pounds of aluminum and steel, and clean up enough hiking trails to stretch from Key West to Seattle according to KAB. In 2008, Great American Cleanup volunteers collected 86 million pounds of litter and debris; planted 107,000 trees and 48,000 gardens, xeriscapes and green spaces; cleaned 144,000 miles of roads, streets and highways; and diverted more than 189 million plastic (PET) bottles and more than 1.4 million scrap tires from the waste stream. Last year in Norfolk alone, more than 14,000 volunteers collected more than 223,810 lbs! Adding to the eye-pleasing look of a cleaner and greener city, studies show that communities, neighborhoods and residents feel safer after volunteers unite to clean and beautify the local environment. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities in this spring's events.

- The list of Great American Cleanup events includes:
- \* Keep Norfolk Beautiful Day - March 28th
  - \* Norfolk Electronic Recycling Day April 18th
  - \* Earth Day Cleanup April 25th

- \* Clean the Bay Day June 6th
- \* Clean City Cookout/Awards Ceremony June 19th

For more information on how to help Keep Norfolk Beautiful, contact Susan Ash at [susan.ash@norfolk.gov](mailto:susan.ash@norfolk.gov) or 441-1347.

Please join us when we participate in the Great American Cleanup in our Civic League area on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> from 800am – noon. (additional information available in this newsletter). Laura Thom is coordinating this cleanup for the Business District, and Ray Duron acts as coordinator for our Adopt-a-Spot area. We need your help. Lets help Keep Norfolk Beautiful by participating in these events.

Thanks and see you at the next civic league meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>

Jim English

### **WCCL MEMBERSHIP**

*CORRECTION!! We now have 91 people who have paid their dues! Help us reach 100 by sending your check for \$5.00 (\$10/two household members) to Ray Duron. Our dues' year runs from January 1 through December 31. If you are a continuing member, please renew for 2009. Ray's address is 530 Sterling Street, 23505.*

<b>Name:</b> _____
<b>Address:</b> _____
<b>Phone #:</b> _____
<b>e-mail:</b> _____

### **WCCL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President	Jim English	423-7154
1 <sup>st</sup> VP/ Membership	Martin Thomas, Jr.	618-6468
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP/ Newsletter Distribution	Sue Classick	489-2315
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)

**News and Notes**

**Join us!! Your help is needed to pick up litter at our Adopt-A-Spot area (Ruthven and W. Little Creek Roads) on Saturday, March 28, 8:00 AM. Questions-call Ray Duron at 423-4337.**

**Here's another opportunity to help your community- March 28<sup>th</sup> marks the kickoff of the 2009 Great American Clean-Up. Join us on the 28<sup>th</sup> as members of our Wards Corner Community come together to Clean Our Corner!**

**Meet for coffee, fruit & pastries from 8:30-9:00 AM at North Shore Sports & Physical Therapy, 7419 Granby Street (next to ATC Fitness). Litter pick-up and beautification begins at 9:00 AM and ends at 11:30 AM.**

**Please RSVP to Laura Thom at 489-5820. Trash bags, gloves, safety vests and bottled water will be provided. All participants will be eligible to win GAC prizes!**

**And, if you can't attend either of these events, remember that picking up litter around your home and neighborhood helps keep our area looking good.**

**We're planning to have some light refreshments after our meeting on March 16. Donations of cookies or other finger foods will be gratefully accepted.**

**Wards Corner Civic League Minutes**

23 February 2009

Wards Corner Civic League met at 6:45PM on Monday, Feb. 23, 2009 in NFW Center. President Jim English opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and then recognized our WCCL Treasurer, Ray Duron, who was honored recently by The Boy Scouts of America with their annual Distinguished District Award of Merit. He also welcomed Jack Blair, past president of WCCL, after an absence.

-PACE Officer Curtis Jackson stated that overtime for police has ended. He reported a Jan./Feb. increase in residential and apartment burglaries. There were 7 car break ins, 2 stolen vehicles, thefts of GPS and license plates, 2 home burglaries on Butterworth and Bradford Avenues and at Payless Shoes. Please e-mail Officer Jackson at [curtis.jackson@norfolk.gov](mailto:curtis.jackson@norfolk.gov) or phone him (831- 3484) to report any issues of concern.

-Norfolk Commonwealth Attorney elections are scheduled on March 10 for a replacement for Jack Doyle who advanced to be judge. Last month, we were introduced to Republican John Coggeshall. Tonight, Democrat Greg Underwood asked for our support. He is a Sr. Deputy Commonwealth Attorney with 16 years of judicial experience and promises to respond to gang crimes in school, promote safe schools, prosecute concealed firearms, and internet/identity theft. Jim English announced that a debate between the two candidates would occur at the WC Partnership meeting on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 7PM.

-Bob Vitek of Northside Civic League and Mason Creek Committee, 2007, presented a visual and informative argument for upgrading/dredging this tributary (dates to 1613) which leads into Willoughby. Environmental problems of storm water management, sediments, retention/detention ponds, Corps of Engineers, flooding on Granby Street prevent this issue from being properly addressed. He asks for our awareness and help in the future.

-The Great American CleanUP scheduled for Saturday, March 28 takes place in the Business Area and on Ruthven Road/West Little Creek Road. (Additional info available in this newsletter)

-Martin Thomas, Jr., WCCL VP gave a WC Taskforce report. He referred to topics of the Southwind Apartments (past Trailer Park near Southern Shopping Center) as changing from moderate income to lower income renters. Committee members have questioned the info given and what we were told to expect back in 2006. Project FOCUS program in Oakdale Farms, Denby and Monticello Village has provided incentives via low interest loans for updating exteriors and relandscaping. Interest has been high. Traffic flow at the Taussig Ave/East Little Creek Road intersection has stalled traffic at rush hour. Synchronization of traffic lights is expected.

-There is still disregard for the one way sign on Grantham Ave near the new condos. Police will be notified. Newport Avenue traffic calming controversy will be confronted by our council members with traffic engineers. There is no money budgeted for medians. Stop signs are a possibility.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Joan Griffey, Secretary

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Police Emergency	911
Police Non-Emergency	441-5610
Pace Officer	831-3484
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

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Beginning Balance			\$1938.27
+ funds received	\$80.00		
-funds disbursed		\$68.25	
Ending Balance			\$1950.02