

WINTER 2022

TAKE NOTICE

North Old Town Independent Civic Association Newsletter

Greetings and Salutations!

BY MACE CARPENTER, PRESIDENT

We begin a new year at NOTICe that promises to be very active. The community has changed dramatically over the past 40 years from an industrial area to a great neighborhood to live and work. We thank those serving Alexandria today and those who helped develop Old Town North.

As many are aware, there is a great deal of development in our neighborhood. Our current population is estimated at 5000 people within 3081 dwellings. With the planned building, our population will be between 10,672 (OTN Small Area Plan) and 12,000 (City of Alexandria). In the OTN Small Area Plan, it was anticipated that our population would only reach 7700 in the year 2040. NOTICe is engaged with developers and the city to help ensure our growth is balanced with a multitude of community support issues such as open space, tree canopy coverage, recreation, parking, etc.

We look for more NOTICe members and leaders. We have a great organization, but our entire neighborhood will benefit from additional volunteers. Please contact us if interested. At the same time, if anyone has an issue concerning Old Town North that NOTICe can support, please let us know. NOTICe is here for you!

Board of Directors

At the January 10th Board Meeting, the Board elected it's 2022 Officers. To learn more about them, please visit our website www.notice-alexandria.org.

President: Mace Carpenter
Treasurer: Karen Branding
Secretary: Mary Harris

Board Members: Agnes Artemel, Eleanor Quigley, Margaret Townsend

Former Board Member Trevor A Riley will serve as Communications and Events Manager.

If you are interested in joining the Board of Directors, please [email us](#)

In Memoriam: Matt Hennessey

BY MARY HARRIS, SECRETARY

Our dear neighbor, long time NOTICe member and friend, Matt Hennessey, passed away in Alexandria on January 6th from complications of pulmonary fibrosis. Matt served as Treasurer of NOTICe and was former President of the Board of Directors for the Marina Towers Condo Association. Matt was 77.

Former NOTICe presidents, Clarence Tong and Mary Harris, remember Matt as “a great friend and well-respected in our community”. Matt was “kind, smart, and funny” and “always ready for a party or travel adventure”. Matt had a long career in public and community service. He was a commander in the US Army in Germany and returned to serve for 30 years in the International Division of the US Treasury Department. Upon retirement, he volunteered with NOTICe and other community organizations and continued traveling the world.

A schedule for a memorial service and celebration of Matt’s life will be planned for the spring. Your memories and messages of condolence can be left on his [Facebook page](#) and at [Demaine Funeral Home](#) for his family and friends.



**"A good
friend and
well
respected in
our
community"**

CLARENCE TONG AND
MARY HARRIS

Creating our Neighborhood Vibe: A Featured Local Business

BY MARGARET TOWNSEND, BOARD MEMBER

NOTICE is excited to introduce a new feature to our Newsletter: Creating Our Neighborhood Vibe. Each Newsletter will feature a local business that adds charm and uniqueness to our community. As COVID-19 continues to place a strain on our community, don't forget to support the businesses that make Old Town North THE place to live.

Since the opening in January 2021, St. Elmo's Coffee Pub Old Town North has become a local gathering spot for everything from an early morning meeting, lunch with friends, or a tasting of local cider, beer or wine. The indoor and outdoor tables are filled with folks from the neighborhood, often with happy pups lounging at their owners' feet at the outdoor tables.

Like other local restauranteurs in Old Town North, owners Christine and Larry Ponzi are embracing the designation of Old Town North as the City of Alexandria's Arts and Cultural District; art work from local artists hangs on the walls of St. Elmo's and the hope is to add open mic nights and professional performances as the challenges posed by the pandemic begin to recede.

St. Elmo's has begun working with the Alexandria High School Music Club at the Mt Vernon location. After a brief pause in recognition of the surge in Omicron cases, the hope is to see the members of the Music Club at St Elmo's Old Town North. Christine and Larry have thoughts of an outdoor music event with the Music Club in April.

St Elmo's
Coffee Pub
529 Montgomery St

Winter Hours
M-Th 7AM - 6PM
F-Sat 7AM - 7PM
Sun 8AM - 6PM

www.stelmoscoffeepub.com





HOA Spotlight: Marina Towers

BY MARY HARRIS, SECRETARY

Located at the north end of North Old Town along the Potomac River, Marina Towers was built as luxury high rise apartments – the first in Old Town - in 1970 and converted to condos in 1981. On the site of historic Bellevue Plantation and Slaters Lane, the six-acre property is beautifully landscaped and heavily wooded. Dubbed “Paradise on the Potomac” by owners for its resort-like feel, Marina Towers is home to some 500 residents in 286 condo units. Surrounded by Daingerfield Island and the Mt Vernon Trail, its residents value the green and open spaces and expansive views of the Potomac River, the Capitol, Washington monuments and proximity to Old Town and Washington, DC. With over 150 bikes registered, cycling is a favorite sport along with running and walking the Mt Vernon Trail. Of course, it’s also very pet-friendly here in North Old Town – so there’s also a large, wooded dog park and picnic area. Green roofs, community gardens, pool and tiki bar outdoor dining areas overlook the Potomac River. Summertime Friday night potluck dinners at the Tiki Bar and seasonal parties bring neighbors together year-round. Some residents have even repurposed the Slaters Lane cul de sac for a pickleball court in fair weather. Welcome neighbors – come visit us on green and historic Slaters Lane.

OTN History

BY MARY HARRIS, SECRETARY

Sophisticated, beautiful and well connected, Portia Lee's Alexandria life bookended North Old Town – first at Bellevue (501 Slaters Lane) and ending at the Wilson-Hopkins House, 609 Oronoco Street. She was the life of the party in a new America.

Born and educated in London, Portia Lee was the daughter of Colonial Virginia diplomat, William Lee (1739-1795) and Hannah Ludwell. While her father was representing Virginia tobacco interests in Europe, her Lee uncles - Arthur Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee and Richard Henry Lee - were considered revolutionary patriots in colonial America. When Portia was 8 years old, her mother died in Belgium. Portia and her younger sister Cornelia soon returned to Virginia to be raised by the Lightfoot Lee family at historic Menokin and began visiting extended Lee family relatives in Alexandria.

George Washington's journal notes young Portia's visit for dinner at Mount Vernon in July 1798 along with other young guests, including Nellie and Washington Custis.

Married the next year, Portia and her new husband, William Hodgson, dined again with the Washingtons at Mount Vernon. Portia and William soon took up residence at Bellevue, a small country estate located 1 mile north of Alexandria Town on the banks of the Potomac, described by Portia in 1801 as "indeed a sweet spot". Portia's letters report many "splendid parties and receptions" (Epistles from Bellevue. Transcribed by T Michael Milller, Library of Virginia). A later report in the Washington Post recalls a Christmas Eve party in 1814 at Bellevue where "we young folks - a right wild and merry crew..." flitted from window to window "having a fine view of both cities illuminated at night" (Washington and Alexandria) to watch the capture of Washington in the War of 1812. Portia's hosting merriment at Bellevue continued until the death of her husband in 1820. By 1825 she had moved to Cornelia and John Hopkins's home at 609 Oronoco Street (a national historic register property) across from the Lee Fendall House where she likely continued to entertain and remained until her death in 1840. Historic Bellevue was sold that year to Alexandria horticulturalist John Slater.



**MEET EARLY
OLD TOWN
NORTH
RESIDENT
PORTIA LEE
(HODGSON)
1777-1840**

Development Update

BY AGNES ARTEMEL, BOARD MEMBER

TideLock (1000 block of N. Fairfax St) has received approval of its development plans from the Planning Commission and is expected to receive City Council approval at the January 22 public hearing meeting. TideLock will provide 65 condominium units and 169 rental units, along with 6500 sf of retail space and 5000 square feet to be used by Levine Music. Levine's CEO Jeffery Tribble recently answered questions at a [virtual community meeting](#). Levine offers musical instruction, and provides several public performances each year.

[901 N. Pitt St \(Waterman Place\)](#) was recently approved by the Old Town North UDAC (Urban Design Advisory Committee). The project will include 250 residential units, 7460 square feet of retail space along the Montgomery Street frontage, and an arts space facing Montgomery Park. The next step is a Planning Commission public hearing.

Alexan/Florence (former Bus Barn), Venue (former Crowne Plaza), and Muse (former MetroStage and Abaca Imports) are nearing completion. Construction barriers are beginning to come down, and new broader sidewalks are being installed. 801 N. Fairfax is somewhat behind the first three, but advancing after a long period of piecemeal demolition. Hilco Redevelopment Partners has submitted its [Concept II](#) to the City's Planning staff for the Power Plant site. A community meeting is planned for January 27 and another for February 24.

And on the horizon....Montgomery Center will make its first submission to the City's Planning Department soon, and is aiming to begin construction in the summer of 2023. Current tenants have been invited to stay until then, and the Carr Companies is offering to assist with relocation, either permanent or temporary.

Also on the horizon...ARHA has issued a [request for proposals](#) from developers wanting to joint venture in the redevelopment of the Ladrey highrise for the elderly on Wythe Street. Proposals are due in February. The Ladrey building is obsolete. It is anticipated that the existing structure will come down, tenants will be temporarily relocated, then move back in once a new building is constructed.



Winter Member Meeting

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH AT 7PM

Join us for our first Member Meeting of 2022 on Wednesday, February 16th at 7:00PM via Zoom. We are excited to welcome newly elected Council Member and North Old Town resident, Sarah Bagley, to talk about her goals for the City and Old Town North. We will open the meeting for a moderated discussion where we will have the opportunity to ask questions and Councilwoman Bagley will be able to ask you thoughts on some matters. Mark your calendars now!



Annual Neighborhood Party

SPRING 2022

Due to the continued effects of COVID, NOTICe will postpone its Winter Party to a warmer month to take advantage of outdoor space. Stay tuned for an exciting announcement in the coming months.

Other Events

The Farmer's Market will shift to Sundays from 11am-3pm during the Cold Weather months beginning January 16th.

Future Dates are
January 16th, 23rd, 30th
February 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

Hilco Community Meeting. The next Powerplant Development Meeting will be on Thursday, January 27th at 6:30pm. This event is hosted by Hilco. To learn more and to register, please click [HERE](#)