Larchmont Edgewater Civic League Meeting

April 24, 2023

1. Welcome - Nate Kinnison. President Kinnison opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.
2. [Angelia Williams Graves](https://delegatewilliamsgraves.com/), Virginia House of Delegates. Currently a Delegate representing the 90th House District of Virginia, Mrs. Williams Graves is running for the newly created 21st District of the Virginia Senate. She was formerly a Norfolk City Council member, Vice-Mayor of the City of Norfolk from 2014 – 2016, and was elected to the Virginia General Assembly, House of Delegates, in 2021. Senate District 21 is a newly formed district as a result of re-districting and is now “all-Norfolk” district, that is, a district contained entirely within the city of Norfolk.
	* Campaign issues she covered: Get guns off our streets – solving a problem by shooting someone is not the answer. A woman’s right to choose is also extremely important to her. She stated: “…however you choose, it is a woman’s right to make that choice.” In addition, she will work for “an economy that works for everyone.” Finally, Delegate Williams Graves supports Virginia’s membership in [RGGI](https://www.rggi.org/), the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Among her accomplishments was a bill that raised jury duty compensation to $50.00/day (see this link for more information: <https://www.pilotonline.com/government/virginia/vp-nw-statehouse-bills-signed-youngkin-20230323-jw3a4y5uafcbnictimhf6745zi-story.html>) – making VA the second highest paying “jury duty” state in the country. Other concerns: Surviving spouses should not be liable for their deceased spouses’ medical debt. Day care centers must be regulated. She noted that 11 Senators and 30 delegates will be retiring this year. Reminder: June 20 is election day. This is a primary for the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates. Early voting starts on May 5 in City Hall only. For additional information, please go to this link: <https://www.norfolk.gov/706/Office-of-Elections>
3. [The Honorable Ramin Fatehi](https://www.norfolk.gov/3907/Meet-Your-Commonwealths-Attorney), Commonwealth’s Attorney, City of Norfolk. Prior to his service in Norfolk, Mr. Fatehi was an Assistant Public Defender in Richmond, an Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney in Chesapeake, and a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in Charlottesville. Mr. Fatehi leads the 4th largest Commonwealth Attorney’s office in Virginia, with 40 attorneys. He commented that one of the key problems faced by Commonwealth Attorney’s Offices is the reluctance of witnesses and others to come forward to testify. He sees this as a solvable issue but one that will take time to address. He has reorganized the office, and for example, has established a juvenile division and two prosecution teams for adults. The Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office works hard to encourage two-way communication with the city’s police department. He feels it is important to educate the press and educate the public. The Norfolk office is a leader in Virginia in trying serious cases. They have tried 4 criminal cases a day on multiple occasions, other cities just one a day. They have very little backlog and are achieving results in very difficult circumstances. The tools of the criminal justice system are largely punitive. Serious concerns include: How to address the criminalization of homelessness and poverty. We need better jobs, health care, and transportation. He briefly touched on Norfolk’s effort to de-concentrate poverty, a practice that can lead to reduced crime – as is happening in the St. Paul’s redevelopment area. He will continue to stand up for progressive ideals. Audience question about Norfolk’s use of public defenders. Response: Norfolk uses a public defender system and court-appointed attorneys. Audience question about requirements of jury duty, i.e. not having a fixed schedule that a prospective juror can plan on. This is handled by the Clerk’s Office, [Norfolk Circuit Court](https://www.norfolkcircuitcourt.us/). There have been continuous problems with jurors not showing up for jury duty, as well as challenges getting a representative jury pool. He encourages people who have questions to call or text him 757.621.1823.
4. Officer Dreer, Norfolk Police Dept. As we have learned, Hyundais and Kias are targets for automobile thieves. If you own a Hyundai or a Kia, consider going to the Norfolk Police Operations Center, 3661 Virginia Beach Boulevard, this Saturday, April 29, between 12-2 for a free anti-theft device for your vehicle. You must be a Norfolk resident, own a Kia or Hyundai which uses a steel key ignition, and present your vehicle registration.
	* Stats from 3.27 – 4.23: 4 larcenies from autos, 1 larceny – other; 1 shooting in an occupied dwelling; 1 commercial burglary. Previous month’s statistics: Very similar, with 4 larcenies from autos. No update on the Crossroads Church commercial burglary.
5. Civic League Committees Need Volunteers. Our civic league needs volunteers for the following committees: Parks & Recreation; Public Safety & Traffic; Membership and Community Engagement; Newsletter; Audit; and Memorial Day Parade Planning. If interested send Mike.Crockett@yahoo.com an email.
6. 2023 Inaugural Memorial Day Parade Update, Michael Crockett. Mayor Alexander, Councilwoman McClellan, bagpipers, a member of the Sons of the American Revolution (dressed in period attire), and scouts are some of the participants we expect to join our parade. A Norfolk fire truck and its crew have also committed to join the parade. We would love to have a band join us. We have obtained general liability insurance. We are in the process of finalizing the traffic control safety plan with Norfolk Police. In terms of volunteers, we could use volunteers at strategic places along the route to help keep order, perhaps help at the beginning and at the end of the parade. Booths: Lafayette River Circle of the King’s Daughters, LECL, Larchmont Elementary PTA, St. Patrick Catholic School, Norfolk Public Library, the SPCA, LUMC Outreach, Scouts, and Norfolk Master Gardeners. Next Zoom planning meeting is on Tuesday, April 25th at 7:00 p.m.
7. Traffic Survey Results, Nate & Michael. 428 validated neighborhood respondents to the survey. 57% were not in support of moving forward with the project; 34% were supportive of moving forward; 4% were indifferent; 5% needed more information.
	* However, regarding speeding concerns on Jamestown Crescent, 58% of respondents were in favor of a traffic study. Raw survey data, including comments, were shared with the City Council.
	* One civic league member, Liz Paiste, discovered via downloaded VDOT data that most crashes occurred because of failure to yield the right of way; failure to maintain control; following too close. The data Mrs. Paiste looked at were from 2015 – 2022.
	* Comment from Zoom attendee: a traffic light would make the intersection safer. Another comment on Zoom that there was a serious accident 4.23 on Jamestown Crescent and Hampton Boulevard involving a motorcycle and a SUV. The motorcyclist, who was speeding (per the Zoom participant) was seriously injured.
	* Nate announced that there will be a flashing light installed on Jamestown Crescent in front of LUMC, but that doesn’t really solve the speeding problem.
	* Follow up from John Stevenson, Director of Transit, City of Norfolk, in email to Civic League officers dated 4.24.23: *The design work is proceeding with the traffic signal plans. The design has been tweaked based on some feedback that we heard during our presentation of the 30% project plan design. Our consultant must complete the design including developing the Special Provisions and Specifications for bidding of the project. Additionally, the plan must still go through the city’s Site Plan Review process which can take several months depending on comments we receive from other city departments. The July 2023 start date was a target date that we set for construction to begin on the project. Based on the current state of the design work I would anticipate some minor delay with our anticipated schedule. Any project delay beyond the July date does not have any impact on the financial obligations of the project.*

*As we have previously stated, we are gathering traffic data and existing traffic control measures posted in the area to help us with the discussions to address concerns raised by residents with the installation of traffic signals. This effort will be done in parallel with the traffic signal project design and review work. As we continue to work with the community, our goal is to have solutions in place or programmed to address residents’ concerns prior to the activation of the signals. As a reminder, construction work is anticipated to take up to a year to complete.*

1. Announcements:
	* May 20 – Yard sale, 2nd Presbyterian. Saturday, July 15, Art show and sale, also at 2nd Presbyterian.
	* Mrs. Williams Graves also noted: Norfolk needs more election workers – if you can work from 0500 – about 2100 on Election Day, please consider becoming an officer of election. There is training, and you will be paid. (Call the Norfolk Elections Office at 757-664-4353 to volunteer)
	* Next Meeting – Social – May 22nd @ Water’s Edge Winery, 7:00 PM

Attendance: 23 attendees in person; 13 attendees on Zoom.

Respectfully,

Gail Nicula, Secretary