



Meeting Minutes & Action Items

Board Members Present

- **Sue Aspinwall** – President
- **Skip Gallagher** – Vice President
- **Jerald Pate** – Vice President
- **Laura Boland** – Treasurer
- **Vlad Ghelase** – Secretary
- **Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel** – Board Member
- **Steve Mercer** – Board Member
- **Thomas Muse** – Board Member
- **Stephan Namisak** – Board Member
- **Marty Stroble** – Board Member
- **Ron Suarez** – Board Member
- **Cindy O'Donnell** – Board Member

Absent

- Lacey Wotring – Board Member (family event; also submitted resignation letter read at this meeting)
- Connie Burks – Board Member (hospitalized)
- Kelly Juneau Rookard – Board Member
- Amy Hubbell – Board Member

Guest Present

- Benjamin Barth – High school teacher, Inspire NOLA; storm drain cleanup (guest speaker)

1. Community Garden: Behrman Elementary & Algiers Point

Laura Boland presented background on the Behrman Elementary and Algiers Point Community Garden, normally associated with the school but never an APA project. The garden was started by Parkway Partners in the 1980s; its most active period was 2015–2019 under Lil McKinnon Hicks and Bella Brown Bedortha. Current challenges include insufficient sun (large oak tree), falling limbs and acorns attracting pests, weeds, theft of tools, and loss of water access from the school.

- Veronica, an Algiers Point native who recently returned, has done initial cleanup with ~12 volunteers and engaged the Men's Club. She is willing to do the labor but does not want to be the lead organizer.
- Land is owned by the Orleans Parish School Board (Behrman Elementary). Any involvement would require OPSB and Behrman Elementary approval. Insurance and a hold harmless agreement would also be required.
- Key decision needed: garden type (pollinator, vegetable, native plants, community, or combination), a dedicated manager, and a committed volunteer base.
- Potential partners: Men's Club, Women's Club, Master Gardeners Greater New Orleans, Native Plant Initiative, LSU AgCenter Parish Agent.
- Jerald Pate noted neighboring property owners are very supportive and water barrel systems are available on both sides.

OUTCOME: No commitment made tonight. Item placed on October agenda. Stephan Namisak suggested sending a community communication to gauge interest before October. A visit to the school in person (new principal) and to the School Board is recommended before any action.

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2. Approval of Minutes

- Note: Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel clarified the correct spelling of her name: Ethelyn (E-T-H-E-L-Y-N), Frezel (F-R-E-Z-E-L).
- August 20, 2026 minutes (as corrected by Vlad Ghelase) were presented and approved by unanimous vote.

3. Treasurer's Report

Laura Boland presented the report, distributed in advance via Slack.

- Income to date: \$2,260 total — memberships \$590; Home Tour tickets \$620; Home Tour sponsorship \$1,050.
- Additional Home Tour receipts through last Monday: tickets \$285, sponsorship \$500, membership \$75 (ongoing).
- Only check written: yearly rent for Mount Olivet Church.
- Authorized but not yet expended: Ronnie Ruiz \$500 (check written, not yet cashed), Wednesdays on the Point \$500 (Skip Gallagher to deliver to Lisa Damore), Welcome Basket reimbursement pending receipt submission, Home Tour allocation \$2,500.

MOTION PASSED: Treasurer's report approved unanimously.

4. Old Business: LuminOak Sculpture

Jerald Pate reported that he picked up where Jim Goodwin left off in coordinating with the Algiers Levee Authority (Jesse Noel). He organized a meeting with the Levee Authority, the artist group, and the electrical engineer. All parties agreed on the installation plan: the aluminum LuminOak sculpture will be placed on the existing pad near the end of the Jazz Walk (near the old dry dock area, where the last light pole currently stands), connected to existing electrical infrastructure via a conduit. Required documentation — a connection diagram and supporting materials — has been submitted. The permitting officer was present at the meeting.

- No financial contribution from the APA is expected at this time. The installation budget allocated by the Arts Council remains available. Jerald Pate will notify the board if a shortfall emerges.

OUTCOME: LuminOak installation is on track. No board action required at this time.

5. Old Business: Annual Member Meeting & Board Retreat

The board discussed the bylaw requirement for an annual membership meeting in December, which has historically been replaced by the Christmas party with no formal business conducted — a bylaw violation.

- Proposed structure: December = purely social Christmas party (open to all, members or not); January = Annual Membership Meeting with formal business including elections, open to the full neighborhood.
- Two options debated: (a) annual meeting and board retreat combined into one January day; (b) annual meeting in January, retreat separately in March. The board voted on (a).
- Stephan Namisak suggested using the Christmas party to hype the January meeting. Jerald Pate noted membership is growing and the welcome basket program has been a significant driver.

MOTION 1 PASSED (unanimous): Annual Membership Meeting to be held in January 2027.

MOTION 2 PASSED (6–3, 1 abstention): Board Retreat to be held the same day as the Annual Meeting, immediately following it.

6. Old Business: Commercial Short-Term Rentals (CSTR) – Deferred

Sue Aspinwall had hoped to take a board vote tonight on the APA's position on commercial STRs to submit to the City Planning Commission ahead of their October 27th recommendation deadline. However, no committee meetings or community discussions took place in the prior month despite being requested.

- Jerald Pate confirmed: this is specifically about commercial STRs, not residential or owner-occupied rentals. The Planning Commission submits recommendations to City Council on October 27th.
- Without a proposal developed outside this meeting, no vote can be taken. Several board members objected to voting without prior discussion.

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- Membership will be polled in order for the board to take a position informed by neighborhood input. This will be fine prior to the October meeting.
- Vlad Ghelase asked to be included in the committee deliberations.

OUTCOME: Board members urged to organize a committee meeting before October 15th and bring a formal proposal. If no proposal is brought, the APA will not have a position submitted to the government agencies in time. Ron Suarez's Civic Engagement Committee to lead.

7. Storm Drain Cleanup – Benjamin Barth

- November 7th, 2026 (Saturday) confirmed as target date, avoiding Saints home game on the 8th.
- Area: south of Opelousas Street (complementary to Men's Club's usual area near the park).
- Benjamin Barth is tracking drain status with a flooding app and has mapped the two main drains in the neighborhood (one on Atlantic). He is pursuing a city vacuum truck to clean drain interiors after external debris removal.
- Logistics: debris bagged and brought to central collection points; city called for special pickup. Coordination with Men's Club on vehicle if needed.
- Volunteers needed. Ron Suarez to recruit through the Men's Club. Sue Aspinwall will request volunteer sign-ups via community communications.
- Community service paperwork: Benjamin Barth to provide his school's template; Sue Aspinwall will replicate on APA letterhead for other area students.

MOTION PASSED: \$100 authorized for storm drain cleanup supplies (contractor bags, gloves, safety vests, water).

Vlad Ghelase nominated Benjamin Barth for Citizen of the Year – board concurred.

8. Committee Chair Confirmations

- Public Safety: Skip Gallagher (confirmed as chair).
- Transportation: Thomas Muse (confirmed as chair). First RTA board meeting attended: September 22, 2026, 6:00 PM, Plaza Street / RTA offices.
- Grants Committee: Ethelyn Hamilton-Frezel

9. HDLC 50th Anniversary – Contribution

The Historic District Landmark Commission (HDLC) is celebrating its 50th anniversary. A coalition of private preservation organizations — Preservation Resource Center (PRC), VCPORA, Louisiana Landmark Society, and Pitot House — is hosting a party on September 30th, 5:30–7:00 PM, at the PRC on Tchoupitoulas. They requested contributions from neighborhood associations to offset food and beverage costs.

- Vlad Ghelase clarified: funds go to private organizations hosting the party, not to the HDLC itself (a public agency). Historic preservation is referenced in the APA's bylaws as part of its mission.
- It was started that participation to the party the APA is contributing to is free for the APA board and maybe for everyone.

MOTION by Vlad Ghelase PASSED (Stephan Namisack opposed): \$100 contribution to the HDLC 50th anniversary party. Laura Boland to send check to PRC (contact: Kristen Brooks, Director of Advancement).

10. APA Home Tour – October 2026 Update

a. Lacey Wotring's Resignation from Board

Sue Aspinwall read a letter from Lacey Wotring stating she must step back from the board due to new volunteer commitments at her daughter's school. She will complete her Home Tour commitment and attend one final board meeting on October 15th. The board expressed appreciation for her extensive contributions.

b. Tour Status

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- Seven homes confirmed (one dropped from eight). Addresses listed on the APA website.
- Sponsorships received: \$2,050 confirmed paid, including \$500 from Barge Board and \$250 from Darren Martin. Additional sponsors outstanding.
- Barge Board: serving as ticket sales location. Sue Aspinwall will set up the table and banner there.
- QR codes: Jerald Pate and 'Benny' are creating individual QR codes for each home, linking to home descriptions (by Stephanie Bruno) and photos (by Natalie). Signs with QR codes will be placed in front of each home.
- Volunteer coordinator: Sue Aspinwall is taking over from Lacey. Shifts are 3 hours, 10 AM–4 PM, both days — four shifts across Saturday and Sunday. Homeowners will provide their own volunteers for some homes; others need APA volunteers. Board members asked to sign up and recruit neighbors. Benjamin Barth's wife also volunteered.
- Ticket holders: Jerald Pate will email all buyers this weekend with event reminder and countdown. Walk-in tickets sold at Barge Board table.
- Wristbands and signs: Jerald Pate to post on Slack asking who has the existing APA signs and wristbands. Skip Gallagher to contact Mike Miller. If new signs are needed, Steve Mercer's wife Kirsten can obtain them quickly.
- Local business involvement: the neighborhood diner is a sponsor and will offer free ice cream to Home Tour visitors. Jerald Pate filming a promotional video there tomorrow.
- Stephanie Bruno book signing at Nomad: possible addition to the tour weekend. Jerald Pate to confirm with Stephanie and ensure it's publicized.
- Homeowner gifts: Sue Aspinwall to gather ideas via Slack (flowers, fruit basket, wine). Jerry noted the budget has room.
- Note on Barge board: engaged as co-organizer originally but has been a little unresponsive. Jerald Pate and Lacey Wotring have been carrying the workload.

11. Night Out Against Crime – October 6th

- NOPD District 4 confirmed they will send officers to Mount Olivet Church on October 6th, 5:00–7:00 PM. This year all citywide celebrations are consolidated at Behrman Park, but NOPD asked APA to do a separate cookout at Mount Olivet.
- Food: Thomas Muse will prepare Louisiana-style food (red beans, jambalaya) in advance using his food truck equipment. Expected attendance: 30–40 people.
- Budget: approximately \$300 (consistent with prior years). Sue Aspinwall will write an APA letterhead letter for Muse to approach Rouses and other grocery stores for food donations, as has been done successfully in the past.
- Fire department and EMS: no longer participate. Mounted police requested — response pending.
- Logistics: no grill needed; Muse will bring his own equipment and serve food. Two folding tables from the church. Food served by volunteers (not self-serve) to manage portions.

ACTION: Jerald Pate to issue social media blast for October 6th, 5–7 PM, Mount Olivet garden. Sue Aspinwall to send Marty a Night Out Against Crime letter for grocery store outreach.

12. Holiday Party – Event Chair Needed

With Lacey Wotring stepping back, the Event Committee chair is now vacant. The holiday party needs a chair to proceed. Ron Suarez agreed to contact Compass to check date availability and discuss catering (prior catering at Compass was not well-received — insufficient food, poor quality). No decisions made tonight.

ACTION: Ron Suarez to contact Compass (Aaron Ste.) and report back on dates and catering options.

13. Civic Engagement Updates (Ron Suarez)

- Dog waste stations: Jim Goodwin will continue managing the levee stations. Board members can assist with restocking; he will come to the board for additional bag funding as needed.

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- Early voting support: The League of Women Voters and nonpartisan partners are hosting a free coffee and donuts event during early voting at the courthouse, October 20th and 27th, 7:00 AM to late morning. They are asking the APA to lend its name and promote voter turnout. Contact: Margaret Walker. No money requested.

OUTCOME: Board agreed to support by putting the word out via APA communications. No formal vote needed. Ron Suarez to confirm details with Margaret Walker so Sue Aspinwall can send a communication.

14. Public Safety (Skip Gallagher) & Connie Burks Update

a. Connie Burks

Connie Burks was absent due to hospitalization for acute anaphylactic shock. Her family took her to Baton Rouge for monitoring. She sent Sue Aspinwall the letter she wrote to NORD about the pool lifeguard situation — a direct and well-reasoned letter. She remains committed to pushing for better pool coverage.

b. Crime and NOPD Update

- Crime in New Orleans has declined. Skip Gallagher cited a Times-Picayune piece by Missy Wilkinson attributing part of the improvement to NOPD Chief Kirkpatrick's enforcement discipline: Year 1 – 9 officers fired; Year 2 – 21; Year 3 to date – 17. Officers now required to personally log in at the start of each shift.
- DA Jason Williams continues to refuse to prosecute police officers, including for serious felonies. Cases proceed through federal or state systems.
- Vlad Ghelase reported two positive personal experiences with NOPD in recent months — prompt response, professional handling of footage and insurance, and follow-up contact with police in another state. He described it as unprecedented in 25 years.
- Note: a man was murdered on Atlantic approximately one month ago. Crime is down but not absent.

15. Neighborhood Improvement (Stephan Namisak)

- Keep Algiers Beautiful cleanup: Saturday, September 19th, 9:00 AM at the courthouse. Board members and community encouraged to attend.
- Wikipedia: the Algiers Point Wikipedia page needs improvement. Stephen Musgrove raised this. Stephan Namisak has forwarded comments to Kevin Herridge (Algiers Historical Society), Amy Hubbell (library section), and others. Anyone can edit Wikipedia.
- Sidewalks and 311: Chris Pomfret walked the neighborhood with Councilmember King to review sidewalk issues. Key finding: 311 complaints are essential — the city needs to see a complaint on record to act. If a public tree in the right-of-way is causing damage, the city is responsible. Best practice: go around tree roots rather than removing them. Stephan Namisak asked Jerald Pate to re-blast the 311 reminder on social media.
- Mothe Funeral Home (McDonough Triangle Park memorial restoration recognition): Stephan Namisak will contact them when the heat advisory lifts. Discussion on whether Mothe should be listed on the APA website despite not being in the neighborhood — deferred; no written policy exists on which businesses to include.
- Riverfront beautification: Jerald Pate is working with Matt (P&L Building owner) and Betsy Gambel on getting three artist proposals for a mural at the ferry landing area — the first impression of Algiers Point for arriving visitors. Consistent signage and a flower bed also planned.
- Business membership / website listings: currently no formal policy. Members and donors are included. Real estate agents and contractors not based in the neighborhood are being added. Board discussed pros and cons of expanding the directory; no formal policy change adopted.

16. RTA Board Meeting – September 22nd

- Thomas Muse will attend the RTA board meeting on September 22nd at 6:00 PM at the Plaza Street / RTA offices and report back.
- Ferry terminal maintenance: at a District C town hall, RTA spokesperson Yolanda Rodriguez stated maintenance allocations (including custodial services for bathrooms) are being built into the 2027 budget. However, bathroom maintenance is contingent on a commercial tenant in the terminal (via AEDF) — if no tenant, bathrooms may close.

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- New RTA CEO selection: two of five candidates — Justin Augustine and Mark Major — previously held RTA roles and failed to deliver on commitments (including promised bathrooms). The board is also considering returning to a third-party management model, which previously resulted in higher costs and absentee leadership.

ACTION: Board members encouraged to attend the September 22nd RTA board meeting, particularly given the CEO selection and the significance of the candidates involved.

17. Grants Program (Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel)

Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel presented a draft framework for restarting the APA mini-grant program, based on materials from Kelly Juneau Rookard.

- Grant size: \$500–\$1,000 per grant (previously \$500); up to 5 grants awarded per cycle = \$2,500–\$5,000 total.
- Proposed timeline: Planning committee assembled by end of February (5–6 non-board APA members for diversity); application window March 22–end of April; awards announced May 24th; implementation 6–12 months; projects completed by start of next grant period.
- Eligibility: aligned with APA membership criteria — live, own a business, or own property in Algiers Point.
- Conflict of interest: board members with a conflict recuse from voting; in the past, a board member's family member received a grant and that board member did not vote.
- Stephan Namisak clarified: the formal grant cycle does not prevent ad hoc funding requests to the board at any time (as Wednesdays on the Point did).
- Vlad Ghelase raised the historical context: the program was created at a retreat to bring budgetary discipline. It fell apart when large, ad hoc expenditures (\$6,000, \$10,000+) made the \$500 grants irrelevant. The board needs to decide at the January meeting/retreat: one annual cycle, or ongoing giving throughout the year?
- Laura Boland to compile past expense history — who asks for money and how much — to inform budget planning and the January discussion.

ACTION: Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel to develop grant application form and compile historical expenditure data. Full program discussion and policy decision to be taken at the January annual meeting / retreat.

18. Fundraising: Charitable Gambling License Proposal

Jerald Pate reiterated the need for the APA to take fundraising seriously given the number of neighborhood improvement projects in development (Riverfront beautification, mural, park, signage). He will bring a formal written proposal for a charitable gambling license (controlled raffles, board-supervised) to the October 15th meeting.

ACTION: Jerald Pate to present a written proposal with parameters (license, bank account, ticket sales plan, revenue projections) at the October meeting.

19. IRS 990 Filing / Nonprofit Status – Resolved

Laura Boland confirmed the APA's nonprofit filing is current: 2023 filing found on record; 2024 confirmed filed. The 2025 filing was late but no penalty was assessed. The APA's 501(c)(3) status is in good standing.

- Crescent Tow8ng sponsorship payment: Jerald Pate will call Keith to follow up on the outstanding check.

20. Welcome Basket Policy: Owners vs. Renters

Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel raised a concern about the current welcome basket policy: baskets go to new homeowners; Ron Suarez clarified that renters are only eligible if their landlord pays for the basket. Vlad Ghelase argued this creates a differential relationship between the APA and renters vs. owners, contrary to the APA's identity as a neighborhood association (not a homeowners association).

- Stephan Namisak noted the APA's membership criteria explicitly include renters. We probably miss some home sales too. But currently renters have zero chance of receiving a basket.
- Ron Suarez noted practical challenges: extending to all new residents could double or triple the scope and cost; tracking renter turnover (especially in STRs that cycle every 2–3 months) is difficult. He suggested a minimum lease duration (e.g., one year) as a possible criterion.



Algiers Point Association

Monthly Membership Meeting | September 17, 2026 | 7:00 PM CT

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- Vlad Ghelase stated that any policy distinguishing between owners and renters is contrary to the APA's bylaws.
- Jerald Pate noted the program has de facto already given baskets to renters when the new occupant of a purchased home was a renter.
- Several board members flagged that any policy change that's been voted on needs to be traced back — if a committee made this decision without a board vote, it needs to come back to the board.

OUTCOME: Ron Suarez to convene a Welcome Basket Committee meeting outside the board to develop a revised, equitable policy proposal and bring it back to the board for a vote.

21. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

Action Items

Responsible	Action Item
Stephan Namisak / Board	Send a community communication gauging interest in the Behrman Elementary garden project before the October meeting. Identify a board member to visit Behrman Elementary in person and contact the Orleans Parish School Board.
Laura Boland	Issue check for Wednesdays on the Point (\$500) to Lisa Damore. Skip Gallagher to deliver.
Laura Boland	Send \$100 contribution check to PRC (Kristen Brooks, Director of Advancement) for the HDLC 50th anniversary party.
Jerald Pate	Follow up with Keith regarding outstanding Crescent Tower sponsorship payment.
Jerald Pate	Post on Slack asking who has the APA yard signs and wristbands. If unavailable, coordinate with Steve Mercer's wife Kirsten for new signs.
Skip Gallagher	Contact Mike Miller to see if he has the APA yard signs from prior Home Tours.
Jerald Pate	Send group email to Home Tour ticket buyers this weekend with event details and countdown. Coordinate volunteer list for home shifts and Barge Board ticket table.
Jerald Pate	Confirm Stephanie Bruno book signing at Nomad during Home Tour weekend and ensure it is publicized through APA channels.
Jerald Pate	Film promotional video at the neighborhood diner tomorrow. Continue Home Tour video content.
Sue Aspinwall	Contact Lacey Wotring to confirm the wristband and signage plan and other pending Home Tour details.
Sue Aspinwall / Jerald Pate	Issue social media blast for Night Out Against Crime: October 6th, 5–7 PM, Mount Olivet Church garden. Send Marty Stroble a Night Out Against Crime letter on APA letterhead for grocery store donation outreach.
Thomas Muse	Prepare food for Night Out Against Crime (October 6th): Louisiana-style dishes (jambalaya, red beans). Bring food truck equipment; confirm table and space needs with Mount Olivet.
Ron Suarez	Contact Compass Point about holiday party date availability and catering options. Report back to the board.



Algiers Point Association

Monthly Membership Meeting | September 17, 2026 | 7:00 PM CT

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Ron Suarez	Confirm early voting event details with Margaret Walker (League of Women Voters) so Sue Aspinwall can issue a community communication about the October 20th and 27th events.
Ron Suarez (Civic Engagement Committee)	Organize a committee meeting before October 15th to develop a formal CSTR position proposal for the board to vote on, ahead of the Planning Commission's October 27th deadline.
Benjamin Barth / Ron Suarez	Finalize November 7th storm drain cleanup logistics: volunteer recruitment, supply procurement (\$100 budget), city special pickup coordination, and Flood Tracking app reporting. Benjamin Barth to share community service paperwork template with Sue Aspinwall.
Thomas Muse	Attend RTA board meeting September 22nd, 6 PM (Plaza Street). Report back at the October meeting, especially on CEO candidate selection and third-party management proposal.
Stephan Namisak	Ask Jerald Pate to re-blast the 311 complaint reminder on APA social media. Follow up with Mothe Funeral Home regarding recognition for the McDonough Triangle Park memorial restoration (after heat advisory lifts).
Ethelyn Hamilton Frezel and Laura Boland	Develop grant application form. Compile APA historical expenditure data (who has requested funds, amounts) to inform the January meeting / retreat discussion on the grants program structure.
Jerald Pate	Bring formal written proposal for charitable gambling license (parameters, bank account, ticket sales, revenue projections) to the October 15th board meeting.
Ron Suarez / Welcome Baskets program	Convene a committee meeting to develop a revised welcome basket policy that equitably addresses new homeowners and renters. Bring a proposal back to the board for a formal vote.

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