

DANA General Meeting January 2025

January 11 2025

Attending: Hannah Ligon, Wayne Benjamin, Cathy Boutte, Ricardo Gutierrez, Elise Williams, Joe Giarrusso, LeeAnn Moss, Matthew Willard, Lieutenant Jeff Giroir, Joseph and Frances, Sam Antonucci, Mr. Lyons, Rachel Borne, Mindy Milam, Clay Latimer, Jacqueline Harrison, TR Hamilton, Lorraine Bible, Anita White, Dale and Dwayne Alexander, Syble Dolliole, Celia Turner, Juanita Fino, Josie LaCour, Carla Goutia, Jake LeBeau

Hannah asks for moment of silence for victims of NYE terror attack.

Cm. Joe Giarrusso, District A

Contact: Joseph.Giarrusso@nola.gov 504-658-1010;
LeeAnn.Moss@nola.gov

Updates:

Dr. Avegno described what she saw on Bourbon St. as a “war zone.” Thanks to first responders. SWB will assume all control for drainage later this year. DPW had some jurisdiction, now it will all be SWB. For next 6 months or so, any catch basin or line complaint should be issued to 311. Legislature changed how traffic camera ticket money is spent. Everything for outside of school zones goes to SWB. School zone tickets are split between city and school. Outside contractor for SWB has done a better job of getting billing issues resolved. Some emails are apparently still being missed. Cannot neglect other city infrastructure as city is preparing for Super Bowl.

Q&A:

Cathy: Traffic cameras. Giarrusso: Passed legislature saying if lights are not flashing, tickets cannot be issued. Now, cameras are allowed to operate one hour before school starts and one hour after school ends.

Mindy: Parking issue along the bayou. Giarrusso: Parking Enforcement is who should be called. They are deployed citywide, so answer is often, "Well, we were working elsewhere at the time." Would help to alert Enforcement before foreseeable problem. Enforcement # 504 658-8100. Might be advantageous to have working group between neighborhood associations. That might get more traction with the city.

Hannah: DPW says they only have four crews and three are dedicated to drainage concerns. Can more of those crews be dedicated to street surface problems? Giarrusso: Those employees will be given the option to move to SWB, so DPW will likely have to restaff. Hannah: School zone/traffic camera question. Giarrusso: Schools and school boards will fight over the money allocated by traffic cameras, though the money from each camera should be dedicated specifically to the school that it is closest to the camera, geographically.

Ricardo: In communication with someone in Environmental at SWB about smell on Roger Williams. Giarrusso: That is a sewer problem, so that would be directed to SWB.

Rep. Matthew Willard, District 97

Contact: hse097@legis.la.gov 504.283.4261

Updates:

Special Session Recap: Changes to LA Tax Code. Personal Income Tax Rate has been lowered to flat 3%. Increased standard deduction from \$4500 to \$12,500. Increased annual retirement income exemption from \$6000 to \$12,000. Should take effect for next year's taxes (Rep. Willard will check to be sure). Corporations will no longer pay franchise tax. Corporate tax rate now consolidated to 5.5%. Can now write-off depreciation of assets annually. Sales tax rates has increased. Possibly now the highest state sales tax rate in the nation. State sales tax now 5%. Had been scheduled to come down to 4% this year. New sales tax on digital products, including streaming services, adobe, Microsoft, e-books, etc.

Article 7 re-write in March (or this summer), will lower income tax rate, give teacher pay raises, establish government growth limit, among other things.

Q&A:

Neighbor: How much revenue will be generated by increases in taxes?
Rep. Willard: Digital 50 to 90 million. Sales tax close to 1 billion. Neighbor: How do those dollars come back to this district? Rep. Willard: Infrastructure and services (family, etc.). Voted against all these tax changes. Budget legislation was thrown together at the last minute because a few Senators had a hunting trip they needed to get to.

Hannah: Corporate taxes down, state sales taxes up. Rep. Willard: Was told we should have a surplus this year and next, but iffy after that. Took \$350 million for BR bridge and moved it back to general fund. Corporate income tax paid for in part by elimination of certain programs (LED, etc.)
Hannah: Teachers. Rep. Willard: Dedicated funds for education were merged and money was moved around to pay off debt, interest saved will be used to give teachers a pay raise. Some school districts will have savings enough to give pay raises, those that don't should be filled in by the Legislature.

Elise Williams, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Engagement

Contact: elise.williams@nola.gov 504.658.4980 (office) 504.658.4933 (mobile)

Updates: Had to leave before she could speak. If you need Community Office hours contact Jake jylebeau@gmail.com or Hannah hannahligon@gmail.com.

Lieutenant Jeff Giroir, NOPD 3rd District

Contact: jjgiroir@nola.gov

Updates:

Filling in for Captain Bush and Officers Wild and Agustin. Born and raised here. Went to Brother Martin. Joined the force at 23 years old. Have worked in Central City and the French Quarter. 3rd District had very good 2024. Tore down London Lodge and shut down Shamrock. Complaints and measures being taken against Wit's Inn and J's Place. Parking citations have been issued to cars in front of the Jockey Pub. 26% reduction in violent crime in the 3rd District in 2024. Car jackings were down 80%. Up in aggravated batteries, most of which were domestic. 70% clearance rate for those. Down 50% in auto thefts. Down 40% in auto burglaries. Have pressed onto officers in platoons and details the need for making traffic stops. Went from 500 to 4000 from 2023 to 2024. Not for the purpose of writing citations. The purpose is visibility. Many auto thefts and burglaries are unlocked cars or cars with keys in them. Persons Crime Unit had a 63% clearance rate and Property Crime Unit was 27% clearance rate in 2024 (highest in the city).

Q&A:

Ricardo: Friend on Harding Dr. had vehicle stolen out of driveway. Many of those neighbors leave cars unlocked to prevent windows from being broken. Lieutenant: That encourages criminals to visit those neighborhoods. Co-related car thefts and armed robberies in 2023. Many of those perpetrators have been put away. Most of car thefts recently seem to be perpetrated by juveniles.

Neighbor (corner of Gentilly and Derby Place): Why does the Fairgrounds not report crimes? Lieutenant: Rapes are handled by SVU, but other violent crimes are handled by the 3rd District. Neighbor: Party buses have been parking in front of her house, playing music at night. Officer: Will get together with Giarrusso to monitor problem. City only has four or five tow trucks, which is a limiting factor. Much of enforcement happens early in the morning. Hannah: Can invite someone from Fairgrounds to attend next meeting to address that problem specifically. Cathy: NOPACC meetings are a resource. Lieutenant: NOPACC meetings are held virtually, as well as in person.

Other Neighborhood Business

Tree trimming. Cathy made 311 request. Will schedule a date and email that information out with the minutes.

Building free food pantry. Will be placed at DeSaix traffic circle.

Also, in talks to install a second bench on the bayou.

If you have an idea for another service project, or would like to get more involved, please let us know.

Mindy: Thanks for decorating the bridge. Bridge now has graffiti on it.

Cathy: You can make 311 specifically for that. Mindy: Will do. Hannah: Can make a 311 request using your phone. Helps to follow-up through Councilmembers office. Cathy: If you call, you have to ask for ticket number (they will not necessarily volunteer it).

Wayne: Fairgrounds Patrol is 24/7. Contact is 504 251-0111. Not on-duty but will assist as needed. Boundaries – north border is DeSaix. Ricardo: Any way to expand border? Wayne: Not without opening provisos, which they are wont to do.

Hannah: Thanks to Cathy for the bridge. She does all the shopping and puts all the decorations together. 3rd District breakfast on February 22nd. See Cathy if you like to volunteer for that.

Cathy: Could we ask LSU to patrol our neighborhood? Hannah: We can certainly reach out to them.

Hannah: Thanks for coming.