

Thalia Civic League Newsletter



Winter 2025/2026

VOL 33- 02

New Product Launch

(Did we get your attention?)

Our new product is this “new and improved” newsletter which we will now publish on a quarterly basis. Articles will be embedded with links to additional information or details. We invite our members to submit articles for inclusion (subject to edits). This is the second in the series, and we are looking for feedback. With your help, we can create a useful tool for all!



Never doubt that a small group of
thoughtful committed people
can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
--- Margaret Mead

HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST!
JUDGING ON DEC 13TH! INTERESTED?
<https://thalianeighbors.com/document-s-to-download#1eb1db89-75ed-4f23-b7ec-83a79e32ff49>

Winter 2025/2026 SCHEDULE

NOVEMBER 24 – City News Update

DECEMBER 15 – Decorating contest
results and cookie swap – *social meeting*

JANUARY 26, 2026 – Speaker TBD

Do **you** have a program or speaker
suggestion? Please, let us know and
we'll see what we can work out!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

As we head into the holiday season, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all our Thalia Civic League members who show up, stay engaged, and help keep our neighborhood moving in the right direction. Your presence, your questions, and your willingness to lean in are what strengthen our community's operational readiness and long-term resilience.

For those we haven't seen in a while, consider this your friendly nudge. Your voice matters, your perspective matters, and your participation is part of how we safeguard the quality of life we all value. Think of our meetings as the community's boardroom: decisions get better when the full team is at the table.

As we gather with family and friends over the coming weeks, let's also recommit to showing up for each other. Thalia works best when Thalia shows up.

Wishing you a warm, safe, and joyful
holiday season!

Rick

(Always looking for volunteers – don't be shy!)

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

911 for **all emergencies**
(757) 385-5000 non-emergencies

City information: (757) 385-3111

email all of City Council at once:
CityCouncil@vbgov.com

City newsletter sign-up:
<https://cloud.mc.virginiabeach.gov/ghbz32hbemp>

Thalia Civic League (general)
tcivicleague@gmail.com

Thalia Civic League
President Rick Boyles
Rick.boyles@computernetworksinc.com

Thalia Civic League
Treasurer Mike Dougherty
(for membership and dues questions)
tclmikedougherty@gmail.com

PUBLIC SERVICE NOTICES

WHEN WALKING IN AREAS WITHOUT A
SIDEWALK, REMEMBER TO WALK OPPOSITE THE
TRAFFIC AT ALL TIMES! WEAR LIGHT COLORED
CLOTHING AT NIGHT - OR USE A REFLECTIVE VEST!

**Using your car's automatic speed control
makes it easy to stay within the
25 MPH speed limit in our neighborhoods.**
(and you won't save but a minute or two if you're
speeding in or out of the neighborhood)

VIRGINIA BEACH HAS A STRICT SET OF RULES
PERTAINING TO OPEN BURNING, ESPECIALLY
DURING THE FALL (and DRY) SEASON(s)
<https://legalclarity.org/can-you-legally-burn-leaves-in-virginia/>

<https://fire.virginiabeach.gov/fire-prevention/fire-regulations/open-burning-recreational-fires>

JOIN THE THALIA CIVIC LEAGUE! (Dare we repeat ourselves?)

The last page of this newsletter is a Membership application. Please take the time to consider renewing or joining if you are not yet a member. We overcame a neighborhood development challenge and showed our strength in numbers with over 220 paid members just three years ago. So far this year, although the number is lower than in 2023, we have doubled our membership numbers over 2024. Although they may not all be apparent, we have new and likely greater challenges in 2025 and beyond. Knowing what is going on *before, not after*, a project is approved by the Planning Commission and City Council is essential. Recent developer initiatives seem to indicate a push is on to test existing laws and code limitations. The Thalia Civic League mission is to ensure our neighborhood residents (aka taxpaying citizens) are involved and aware *in the light of day*. There is strength in numbers – stand up and be counted!

We **need** “new blood” to round out our management team – we have “open” slots in our elected positions as well as opportunities to head up committees such as Newsletter, Advertising, Community Service Project(s), Hospitality and others.

Every little bit helps!

Mike D



Piney Point - 2024



TOWN CENTER HOLIDAY EVENTS

<https://www.visitvirginiabeach.com/trip-ideas/holiday-events-at-town-center/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CentralBusinessDistrictAssociation/>

The “official” holiday season starts with the “Lights on Fenwick” Grand Illumination on November 29
(insert you and your group visiting this and other favorites until...)

Last Night on The Town – 12/31
(It may be last, but it isn’t least! A fave!)

DON’T FORGET THE OCEANFRONT!

If you haven’t (or are a loyal fan), be sure to visit **Holiday Lights at the Beach**



Don’t forget local bazaar market holiday events!



<https://allevents.in/virginia-beach/christmas-markets-and-fairs#>

Okay, now some somber words...

The holidays bring joy and happiness to us all, often with a relaxed security posture. **ALWAYS CHECK YOUR SURROUNDINGS!** Make yourself an anti-victim by using good sense and exercising emotional restraint during the holiday season and year-round.

Be aware; don't be a willing victim
Lock your car, your house and any outbuildings – faithfully

NO deal that sounds too good to be true ever is; BOTH in-person and electronic “deals”

If you don't know the caller or the number – DON'T ANSWER; if no message – well...

NEVER (ever-ever) open an email attachment from someone you don't know; send it to junk mail and block it

NEVER call the help number when a “your computer is locked” message tells you to. Unplug it and call an “IT Smart” friend to help

If you have a security system, USE IT! Ensure that you are monitored 24/7

(why would you not?) Test your system regularly; be sure any children can use it

Outside lights and automated inside lights *absolutely* WILL deter burglars; LED lighting is cheap

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS – left, right and behind you (a basic tenet of “Neighborhood Watch”)

And...the Number 1 Rule is:

TRUST YOUR SPIDEY SENSE!

TOP BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

You Become Part of Something Bigger
You'll Make New Contacts
You Can Build Meaningful Connections
You Might Learn New Skills
You Might Improve Your Mental and Physical Well-Being
You Will Gain Perspective and Empathy
Your Actions improve Your Community

You Will Make a Real Difference

PS: Help Wanted! Contact us at
tcivicleague@gmail.com

When is the last time you:

- Held a door open for a stranger?
- Read a hardcover book?
- Played a board game?
- Made a “family casserole”?
..and shared it with a neighbor?
- Got serious about your health?
- Had a disagreement with a friend (who is still a friend)?
- Went to a neighborhood restaurant NOT a chain? LUKESTENY'S
- Tried a new activity? (How about Thalia Civic League?)

Addressing the Decline of Civility in Public Discourse

Authored by NLC intern Morgan Knight with support provided by Melissa Williams

Across the country, residents and leaders alike are struggling with rising incivility, intimidating behaviors and in some cases violent behavior towards those in public offices.

At a town hall hosted by NLC, in partnership with the American Psychological Association (APA), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the American Public Health Association (APHA), experts addressed the decline in civility and its impact on mental health, governance and community leadership.

The panel featured Dr. Bill Doherty, psychologist and co-founder of Braver Angels; Mayor Steve Patterson of **Athens, Ohio** and President of NLC; Julia Novak, CEO and Executive Director of ICMA; James Bridges, Director of Health and Human Services for Montgomery County, Maryland; and Matt Leighninger, Director of the Center for Democracy Innovation at the National Civic League.

The town hall, streamed on C-SPAN, sparked a series of questions from attendees, many of whom were grappling with disruptive behavior in council chambers, hostile public comments and internal bullying among elected officials. Experts responded with practical tools and policy recommendations aimed at helping local governments navigate these challenges.

Setting Standards for Elected Officials

One of the most pressing concerns mentioned was how to maintain civility among elected officials themselves. Panelists emphasized the importance of boards and councils developing clear behavioral standards before conflicts occur.

“Maintaining a calm presence is important in the face of heightened emotions,” said Dr. Doherty of [Braver Angels](#).

“Local leaders are passionate about their communities, and that passion can sometimes be misread. That’s why councils must develop clear behavioral standards in advance and hold each other accountable.”

NLC President Mayor Steve Patterson emphasized that when staff face incivility or bullying, managers must act swiftly to protect employees and remind governing bodies that, as employers, council members have a duty to treat their workforce with dignity and respect. He warned that failing to uphold this obligation undermines both morale and organizational culture.

Managing Public Interactions

For many public officials managing interactions with the public can also be fraught as they try to manage and prevent incivility from the public during government meetings. Mayor Patterson recommended setting expectations early by sharing guidelines for respectful participation at the beginning of every meeting, whether in person or hybrid.

When public comments become hostile or personal, the chair’s response is critical. Allowing disparaging remarks to stand unchallenged can weaken public trust, while prompt acknowledgment of incivility sends a clear signal of respect for staff and colleagues.

In more heated cases, calling for a recess can be an effective de-escalation tool, giving tempers time to cool and allowing the governing body to return with a restatement of behavioral expectations.

Rebuilding Trust and Promoting Civility in Polarized Times

Experts also address restoring trust and encouraging respectful dialogue following times marked by ongoing incivility, hostility or division within the community.

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Local governments can play a unique role in having a distinctive opportunity to counteract national polarization by concentrating on community-specific concerns, facilitating dialogues around civility and creating standards grounded in common values instead of political partisanship.

Rebuilding trust after sustained incivility requires deliberate relationship-building. The recommendations were identifying and empowering respected voices from both sides of a conflict to encourage their own communities to move forward. These bridge-builders, once connected with counterparts, can help foster understanding and reduce hostility.

Understanding the Impact of Civility

Finally, experts examined the broader rise of misinformation, including the spread of “alternative facts.” They noted that policy-relevant facts are rooted in social trust and whether communities believe in the reliability of certain experts or institutions.

As incivility continues to rise in communities across the country, experts emphasized that local governments are both on the frontlines of the problem and uniquely positioned to lead solutions.

By setting clear standards, holding each other accountable and modeling civility even in tense moments, leaders can create environments where respectful dialogue and trust once again become the norm.

Morgan Knight is an intern at NLC, supporting the Center for Digital Engagement, Marketing & Communications. She is a senior at Howard University.

OK, let's fade out with some laughs for a change...

**Remember as a kid
when you fell on the
trampoline everyone
would keep jumping
so you couldn't get
back up? That's
basically life as an
adult.**

**My teacher told me not
to worry about spelling
because in the future
there will be autocorrect
And for that I am
eternally grapefruit.**

Baby Boomers will get this 🤔😂
Too Funny!!



Nothing refreshes my memory of what I need from the grocery store more than coming home from the grocery store.





GET TO KNOW E-BIKES

In Virginia, an electric bike (eBike) is defined as a vehicle with a seat, pedals, no more than three wheels, and an electric motor that's 750 watts or less. Virginia recognizes e-bikes as fitting into the following three classes:



Class 1

- Pedaling required with electric assist up to 20 mph.



Class 2

- Self-propelled, no pedaling required.
- Electric assist up to 20 mph.



Class 3

- Motor assisted pedaling.
- Electric assist up to 28 mph.
- Must be 14 years of age to operate legally.
- Helmet required by law.
- Speedometer required.



750 Watts Plus

E-Bikes with motors that produce more than 750W or exceed 28 mph with pedal assist, may be considered a motorized vehicle which could be subject to stricter regulations.

Download the VBParkFinder App to find bike trails and paths across the city



This brochure does not address the use or operation of Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPMDs) by individuals with mobility disabilities.



E-BIKE FAQ's

DO I NEED TO WEAR A HELMET WHILE RIDING AN E-BIKE?

Yes. Any person using an e-bike is recommended to wear a helmet. **Riders 14 years and younger, and riders of Class 3 e-bikes are required** to wear a helmet. (§ 46.2-904.1)(Sec. 7-50).

IS THERE A SPEED LIMIT WHILE RIDING?

Virginia Beach City and state codes don't establish a universal speed limit for e-bike users. However, Virginia Beach City Code (Sec 7-60) requires all cyclists, including e-bike riders, to operate safely and responsibly. This means avoiding reckless riding, maintaining a reasonable speed, and never endangering anyone's life, limb, or property.

DO I NEED TO YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS WHILE RIDING?

Yes. Virginia Beach City Code requires all bicycle and e-bike operators to yield to pedestrians, to provide an audible signal before passing, and dismount when necessary to avoid contact. (Sec. 7-59.)

VBTRAILS.VIRGINIABEACH.GOV

E-bike Rider Guide



Parks & Recreation

WHERE CAN I RIDE MY E-BIKE?

	Bicycles	Class 1 e-bikes	Class 2 e-bikes	Class 3 e-bikes	Street Legal Low-Speed Vehicles	Motorized Vehicles
 Shared Use Paths						
 Off-road mountain bike trails						
 State parks. ¹						
 Federal parks. ¹						
 Sidewalk						
 Bike Lane						
 Street ²					 	
 Interstate						
 Town Center Sidewalks ³						
RESORT AREA						
 Oceanfront Bike Path						
 Oceanfront Boardwalk & Sidewalks ³						
 Atlantic Ave (May-Oct)						

1 Not regulated by City of Virginia Beach. Regulations vary by agency and land management unit. Check each park for specific regulations.

2. LSV's only permitted on roads with a speed limit of 35 or under.

3. E-bikes, like regular bicycles, are prohibited on all sidewalks in the Oceanfront Resort Area and at Town Center.

The Americans with Disabilities Act states that e-bikes used as a Power Assisted Mobility Device due to a mobility disability can be used anywhere pedestrians can walk.

DO'S



Do - Wear a helmet.



Do - Ride with tra~ c.



Do - Give pedestrians the right of way.



Do - Obey stop signs, all tra~ c controls, and posted speed limits.



Do - Use hand signals when turning or stopping.



Do - Use required lights and reflectors to ensure you can be seen in low light.



Do - Park at appropriate bicycle racks.

DONT'S



Don't - Use cell phones while riding.



Don't - Wear headphones while riding.



Don't - Transport passengers.



Don't - Ride while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND – KNOW WHAT TO THROW!

RECYCLE THIS!



BOTTLES, JUGS & CANS

PLASTIC: BOTTLES & JUGS

GLASS: BOTTLES & JARS

CANS: TIN, ALUMINUM, STEEL



NO PLASTIC BAGS | NO TAKEOUT CONTAINERS | NO STYROFOAM | NO BUTTER/YOGURT/OILY CONTAINERS | CLEAN & EMPTY

PAPER & CARTONS

PAPER: OFFICE PAPER, NEWSPAPER, JUNKMAIL, MAGAZINES, & PAPER BAGS

CARDBOARD: FLATTENED SHIPPING BOXES & CHIPBOARD BOXES

CARTONS: MILK, JUICE, & BROTH/SOUP



NO TISSUES/NAPKINS | NO PIZZA BOXES | NO SHREDDED PAPER | NO STYROFOAM OR PACKING PEANUTS | CLEAN & EMPTY

KNOW BEFORE YOU THROW



Include only the listed items. Make sure they are clean and dry. Unsure of what's accepted? Check first.



When in doubt, throw it out! Not everything is recyclable and that's okay!



QUESTIONS? VISIT WWW.VIRGINIABEACH.GOV/WASTEMGT