

EDITORIAL

Sign up for Citizens Academy



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The operations of local government can often be murky, not always intentionally so but mostly because most citizens are engaged in their daily lives and are not intimately involved with the ins and outs of city departments and constitutional offices.

But it's never a bad thing to be more informed, and that opportunity is available with the Suffolk Commonwealth's Attorney's Office's seventh annual Citizens Academy.

The first class will be on Feb. 28, and the four-week program will take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday through March 28 at the Godwin Courts Building on North Main Street.

Participants will be taught the mission, policies and day-to-day operations of the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, along with the city's other four constitutional offices — Clerk of the Circuit Court, Commissioner of the Revenue, Sheriff's Office and Treasurer's Office.

Commonwealth's Attorney C. Phillips Ferguson says local residents who participate in the program will become more aware of the realities of criminal cases and how they are prosecuted, as well as ways they can help keep themselves and their friends and neighbors safe from crime.

His counterparts in the city's other constitutional offices will also explain how their departments work.

Participants can learn, among other things, how the Commonwealth's Attorney chooses to prosecute cases, how many records the Clerk of the Circuit Court keeps, how the Sheriff's Office keeps the courthouse safe and what the difference is between the Commissioner of the Revenue and the Treasurer.

Did we mention it's all free? That's a price anyone can enjoy.

Past participants have raved about the program, and we think it's a safe bet that you will, too.

The deadline to submit applications is Feb. 15. Visit suffolkva.us/204/Commonwealths-Attorney (<http://suffolkva.us/204/Commonwealths-Attorney>) to fill out the application and find out more information, or contact Community Outreach Coordinator Joan Turner at 514-4379.

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