

NEARTOWN ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING
Cherryhurst Community Center, Tuesday February 26, 2002
Minutes

NTA Pres., Ed Gonzales, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He announced that the main purpose of the meeting would be to explain the process of the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The District D, CIP public meeting is scheduled for two locations on March 12th & 14th. Ed also announced that there are currently 121 children signed up for the Neartown Little League program that encompasses Montrose, 4th Ward and the Museum/Binz area.

Treyna Finley, with the city's Keep Houston Beautiful program, gave a presentation on the Adopt-A-Block program. This is primarily a litter prevention program open to any civic-minded groups, churches, businesses, etc. The group must make a two-year commitment to remove litter at least four times per year along a 500-yard stretch (5 blocks) of incorporated right-of-way. The Keep Houston Beautiful program will provide trashbags as well as lawn and safety equipment and pick up the bagged litter. It will also post a permanent sign with the COH logo and the participating group's name.

HPD Sgt. Johnny Vollert announced that HPD's 2002 March on Crime program is offering several services including home security surveys, auto theft prevention through the HEAT vehicle registration/id program, and the issuing of trigger locks available at the Storefront. Fliers with specific information were distributed.

Ed Gonzales introduced Bridget Jensen, the new District D Community Liaison for Councilmember Ada Edwards' office. Bridget, in turn, introduced John (J.P.) Pluecker, Dist D Outreach Coordinator, who explained that Councilmember Edwards is currently working on an action initiative for Dist. D. Bridget provided a handout listing the active and pending construction projects in Dist. D. Representatives from three different city departments spoke and answered questions about how their departments interact with the CIP process:

Jason Jeffries (Neighborhood Svcs. Div. of the Planning Dept.) Mr. Jeffries is the Super Neighborhood planner assigned to Neartown/Montrose (he also works with Upper Kirby). He explained that the public CIP meetings are put on through the Long-Range Planning Div. of the Planning Dept. The new Super Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) is a program for neighborhoods to request both operational items from the city (such as Stop signs, ditch/vacant lot cleaning, police enforcement, etc.) as well as capital improvements (such as streets, sewers, etc.) The first 2002 Neartown/Montrose SNAP has been submitted to Dept. directors and is currently under review. The SNAP requests include street reconstruction of Westheimer, Alabama and Fairview, upgrading of the Dunlavy Park baseball field, and obtaining the current HSPVA site (scheduled to be vacated) as a neighborhood park.

Mike Shannon (Finance and Administration Dept.) Mr. Shannon emphasized the vastness of the city and the importance of working through the Super Neighborhood program. He noted that the Super Neighborhood should act as a filtering and prioritizing body so that the city doesn't have to sort through multiple overlapping requests and guess as to which requests are more important to the neighborhood. He explained that CIP is about large projects (physical improvements with 10, 20 or more year life span) that require perhaps years of planning. Finally, he emphasized the importance of referring to the existing CIP and various departmental master plans as part of developing neighborhood requests.

David Leal (Public Works and Engineering Dept.) Mr. Leal addressed the topic of street rebuilding and repaving which several attendees had noted was their primary concern. He noted that one way of getting streets repaved was to submit a request to the Mayor's office for the Neighborhoods to Standard program. Otherwise, the process for getting neighborhood streets rebuilt (including curbs and driveway skirts) requires a petition process whereby 75% of the property owners must sign and agree to an assessment for a fraction of the costs (the city has not actually charged this assessment in over a decade). The petition forms are available from Public Works and other city sources. Public Works schedules projects along major thoroughfares such as Alabama and Westheimer without this petition process.

The meeting was adjourned.

NTA Secretary, Dana Padgett