

NEARTOWN ASSOCIATION (NTA) MEETING
Cherryhurst Community Center, Tuesday September 24, 2002
Minutes

NTA President, Ed Gonzales, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Ed reported that NTA has a working balance of \$1,635.

Announcements and upcoming meetings-

1. Ed Gonzales was scheduled to meet with TABC on 9/25 to re-establish contact as the community liaison.
2. The next NTA-Midtown Freeway Spur meeting was scheduled for Monday, 9/25.
3. A Bike/Walk protesting changes in the bike lanes on W. Alabama, sidewalk removal and changes at Memorial Park was scheduled for 9/28. The event will start from Whole Foods at 4:30 p.m.
4. Bridget Jensen (Liaison, Ada Edwards Office) reported that a new email system for issued permits has been started by COH.

Scheduled topics -

NTA-Midtown Freeway Spur Task Force:

Mike Mark (Task Force, Co-Chairman, texdogdoc@aol.com) reported that the task force has 4 goals:

1. Negotiate changes with TXDOT on the US 59 Spur 527 design. The goal is to lower the spur below grade until it connects to Brazos, Louisiana and Travis streets.
2. Negotiate traffic mitigation
3. Oppose Richmond tree and esplanade removal.
4. Make the best deal for Neartown.

Mike Mark reported that the process of negotiation with TXDOT had begun. Although some work under the contract has begun, TXDOT has shown a willingness to discuss the lowering of the spur below grade. The process of building a coalition has also begun, including the identification of specialists. Professionals for possible inclusion are engineers, lawyers, environmental specialists and hydrologists. This coalition will represent NTA-Midtown in all phases of the project, including implementation.

NTA-Midtown would prefer to decouple the Spur 527 reconstruction from the other aspects of the Hwy 59 re-construction.

An initial meeting regarding Spur 527 with NTA and Midtown representatives was held on 9/16. The meeting was hosted by Ada Edwards and included representatives of Sheila Jackson Lee. Julie and Alex Maddocks (maddocks@pdg.net) represented NTA.

Annise Parker is studying the possibility of bridge loans for businesses during the Hwy 59 re-construction.

To get the current status of downtown street traffic and construction, go to the following website:
www.downtownstreets.com

Stop Signs:

Signs are being requested for several intersections to help control cut-through traffic. Ed Gonzales has had a meeting with the City of Houston to discuss this issue. Additional meetings will be necessary.

Mayor's Drainage Initiative:

As part of the "Buffalo Bayou Project," the mayor has re-directed \$12 million from CIP projects. All CIP projects are on hold. This will affect the planned street reconstruction in the Castle Court area. It was not known if current projects would be stopped.

CIP and SNAP for 2003:

Since the Mayor's Drainage Initiative has diverted money from 2002 projects, the suggestion was made to roll 2002 projects into 2003.

HSPVA - to - Park Meeting:

A meeting was held at the office of Ada Edwards to discuss the conversion of the HSPVA property into a community park. Ed Gonzales and Raju Adwaney made the proposal. Al Gaines of HISD attended. The HSPVA property was a park with a pond before becoming a school. The proposal envisions the raising of private funds for the conversion phase. Title would need to transfer from HISD to COH. The proposal will be made to the HISD Board of Directors.

Bars:

When problems arise with bars in the Neartown area, complaints must contain specific addresses. These addresses and complaints are recorded by TABC in order to generate an operating history for each.

1. The police will not ticket for parking problems near the Tavern on Waugh at West Gray. Neighbors are encouraged to place calls for police service.
2. The new bar owner at 1500 W. Alabama was scheduled to meet with COH Planning department to discuss parking at 2:00 pm on 9/25. All interested parties were encouraged to attend.
3. The bar at 202 Tuam has applied for a TABC license. This bar is not owned by the same group as "Insomnia."

Civic Association Reports-

Vermont Commons: Some trash problems continue. Water meters are being re-done. COH will fix water meter problems, if called.

Mandel Place: "Kudos" to Ada Edwards for recent support. MP requested support for the parking issue with the bar at 1500 W. Alabama.

Avondale: COH has filed a "Nuisance Abatement" with "Numbers," containing changes which must be made if the bar is to keep its license.

Audubon: No report

Hyde Park: Catherine Shepherd worked to set-up the planting of 75-100, 15 gallon trees in October.

East Montrose: COH helped to cause the planting of 25 trees to replace a large oak tree that was cut down. The 25 trees were obtained after a citation was issued.

N. Cherryhurst: Sewer line progress is being made.

Shady Gardens: Reliant Energy has removed 6 telephone poles and has reinstalled the power lines underground.

N. Montrorse: COH plans to replace sewers in a 9 block area bounded by: West Gray, Clay, Waugh and Marconi. These lines will be placed down the center of streets.

WAMM: A question was raised concerning the new University of St. Thomas street signs. No one present knew why they had been changed or who had given approval.

The meeting was adjourned.

Recorded by, Mike Padgett