

Minutes Neartown Meeting 09/26/06

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 by Allen Ueckert, Neartown President.

The meeting participants formally offered congratulations to the Civic Associations which had worked successfully for designation of their neighborhoods under the civility ordinance. Allen Ueckert noted that a follow-on issue would be the extension of the civility ordinance to the rest of Neartown.

It was noted that the Friends of Mandell Park recently sponsored a “bake off” of designs for the Mandell Park master plan. Architecture students participated in the contest and received a grade for their efforts. Everyone who attended the open house voted for their preferred proposal; one or more pieces of each may be absorbed into the master plan to be implemented.

Allen Ueckert discussed status of the University Line. Metro is currently evaluating 48 different proposed routes, brought to their attention through the open public meeting process.

The observation was made that the graffiti ordinance is expected to be rolled out soon. Enforcing the ordinance can bring felony charges if the damage is costly, or if it is a case of “serial tagging.” Neartown interested parties are encouraged to use 311 to report graffiti – this is the key tool which is used to set City priorities. Property owners can also file waivers to allow others on their property to remediate. Crimestoppers is also plugged in to the graffiti initiative. Dale Harger mentioned that Paul Lucia has done a great job of tackling graffiti in the Heights. The idea was brought forward that his purview should be expanded.

On a related issue, Carol Galeener brought up the issue of abandoned shopping carts littering our streets. It was decided that she would bring forward a proposed communication to City Council on the subject at the next meeting.

Allen Ueckert indicated that Ellen Cohen, Martha Wong and the Libertarian candidate would be invited to attend the October meeting, along with Henley and Culberson.

A motion was passed creating a Nominating Committee to bring forward a slate of officers for Neartown, with a target of a November vote.

River Oaks Shopping Center: a communication to Weingarten was read and approved as a device to engage Weingarten in dialogue about the proposed

redevelopment of the River Oaks Shopping Center. It was noted that Robin Holzer intended to send around a petition to “save” the Alabama Theater.

Robert Graham noted that the last PIP meeting addressed identify theft and Medicaid fraud. There was discussion of the proposal to merge the Heights and Neartown PIP sessions as an efficiency and convenience measure, particularly with respect to parking. Several meeting participants noted that alternative sites were in fact less likely to draw Neartown participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.