

Neartown Association Monthly Minutes

March 23, 2010

Commence 7:06 p.m.

25 in attendance

David spoke disheartenedly re March 16 he went to the CIP meeting
not satisfied w/city's movement on CIPs
lack of clarity in our (Super'Hood) role in process
we are competing with more needy parts of town for the same small amount of \$
we can call 311 for things upwards of \$350,000
Jeron had a few non-committal words on this topic
David's working on it

Follow up to the October 2008 Neartown Development Forum
meaning, there will be another meeting to follow up, in May 2010

Reps from Carnegie Vanguard High School

Peggy Sue

it will be on the now-vacant lot on Taft & W. Gray

April 2012 will be finished and move-in date is Aug 2012

1 of top 100 schools in nation

previously 96, now it's 77

427 students currently; will be 600 when they get in the new building

only vanguard high school in Houston - "Vanguard" means Gifted & Talented

the kids are way above the National Average

these kids WANT to go to school and learn

very few if any disciplinary issues in this student population

kids come from all over Houston

all races and etc. represented

the Orange Crush bottling plant on W. Gray will be an arts annex

would like a parking garage, but due to \$ will probably be surface parking

Carnegie Vanguard's new building is on Facebook

Parking is a concern of many residents, mainly in North Montrose

Discussion re parking

they do not want to be a parking burdon to the neighborhood

it's a small school, with 22 kids in each class (most Houston classes have 30)

many classrooms are not housing kids, but used for other purposes

yet the city requires 9.5 spaces per classroom

this means COH requires 320 spaces,

even though the students number only 600

and many of them (85%) take the bus

and others car pool or are dropped off by parents

parking requirements that work for other schools

are unrealistic and unnecessary for Carnegie
so they are asking Neartown's and the neighborhood's support
for a variance to the parking ordinance
they want parking regulations to reflect actual needs of the kids
and the # of kids
if they get the variance, they can have more green space
this green space may abutt the park directly to the east
regular non-student people could (probably) use this green space
will combine parking lot with that of neighboring Lincoln Elementary
which really does not use much of it's lot anyway
The lot is a little over 7 acres
HSPVA waved rights to this site - they are looking in the Theater District
and will move 4-5 years from now

Coming to the Fourth Ward is a TIRZ-funded "Liveable Center"
for walkability, improvements, etc.

Chris Patterson from the Montrose Land Defense Coalition group spoke
he attended a rally and walk to protest the HEB coming to W. Alabama & Dunlavy
discussion re this, mostly from David
HEB has submitted to the city a preliminary plat
they have not solicited input from the neighborhood
it's "the most valuable piece of property in Houston today"
gorgeous trees (although many are "trash trees")
HEB has have applied for a replat,
but nothing they are asking for requires action from the city
so they will be able to go ahead with anything they want to do
they have ownership, \$, and there are no laws or regs.
as to what can be done with the property
public input is the only thing that can cause HEB to change its plans
on the good side, there will be jobs created, the tax base will increase,
and HEB is potentially a good neighbor
they promise green space and a commitment to environmentally sustainable practices
and are a Texas-based company
David attended a meeting in Sue Lovell's office today, on this subject
on April 1, this topic will be on the docket of the Planning Commission
which David sits on, and which is an open meeting
David showed 5 potential layouts for the plot of land
with various locations for the building, parking, green space, etc.
HEB will possibly have small retail / dining / park along the front (W. Alabama)
it has not hired an architect yet
the HEB pantry on Motnrose & Westheimer failed
although HEB claims it's a plan they "abandoned"
Ray talked about the acres of "virgin forest" formerly on TC Jester at 18th
that were bought and bulldozed by Albertson's some years back
over the very loud protests of neighbors and publicity
public pressure, in the way of boycotting the store, closed it in short order

discussion from various attendees on this topic
streets not capable of handling the traffic
infrastructure not capable of handling the weight of the traffic
trees, green space, emergency vehicle access, damage to existing businesses, jobs
Ray told about people trying to get alternatives to present to HEB
re layout of the lot and placement of building, parking
retention and addition of trees
underground of multi-tiered parking
Chris & the Montrose Land Defense Coalition has a petition for better use of the land
Although no formal vote was taken, it appears that the official stance of Neartown
is to protest this development, at least, to try to get HEB to
listen to and be responsive to the neighborhood in whatever it builds
Jason from 1st Montrose Commons is concerned that the current HSPVA location
will suffer the same fate when they move away in a few years
and asked for Neartown to support them in this, too
to which David said "OK"
Boulevard Oaks, the neighborhood directly to the south, on the other side of Hq 59
is also concerned, due to increased traffic coming over the bridge
and may join in our fight
in fact, the only reason the bridges got saved a few years ago
was because HFD needs them to access in emergencies,
many think Richmond Avenue would be a better location
David wants an organized vocalization of our concerns
our goal would be to get HEB to engage in and be responsive to the community
Ed says have one united goal to present to HEB
David wants Greg LeGrand to speak (or at least attend) the Commission's meeting
Ed made a motion on this
Kay seconded it
the vote passed unanimously

we adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Young
Secretary