

Nearatown Association Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2016 – 7:00 PM

Cherryhurst Park Community Center, 1700 Missouri St

1). Meeting was called to order by President Greg LeGrande at ~7pm followed by introductions

2). Miscellaneous

- Montrose Special Parking Area (SPA) Community Meeting of April 12, 2016 –

Greg reported on this meeting which he felt was contentious and unproductive. He passed around an executive summary on the proposed SPA and a copy of the public comment form both of which can be found on the City Planning Department website at:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/Off-Street-Parking-Ordinance.html>. Greg encouraged all who have an interest to submit comments to the City.

Tony Allender of the Montrose Management District (MMD) came forward to answer questions about the Montrose SPA. A major topic of discussion was the plan by a private party to build a parking structure in the 1600 block of Westheimer, which was discussed at a recent MMD board meeting. Jake Mase indicated that Mandell Place is concerned that a 3-4 story structure may be constructed adjacent to their neighborhood without any notice or input from the civic association. Tony confirmed that the structure is outside the currently planned SPA and that MMD is not subsidizing the planned structure in any way. The ensuing discussion focused on the need for community input at the front end of such projects and a request that MMD put in place a process that would require consultation with concerned neighborhoods before the MMD board would approve or endorse any project that would impact a neighborhood or neighborhoods. Tony agreed that he would raise the concerns about early communication with his committee and come back next month with a draft process to review.

Other items discussed included a proposal that Montrose look at metered street parking comparable to what has been done in the Washington Avenue district, and a question about how MMD will assess the impact of additional cars in the neighborhood.

- Houston Code Parking Requirements – Web Link
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5lqic8r0nbla0hi/Parking%20Spaces%20Required%20per%20Sq%20Ft%20per%20Type.pdf?dl=0>
- Neighborhood Associations Best Practices – Steve Longmire
Steve reiterated his request for input from the civic associations on how they handle common tasks. The goal is to compare and compile best practices that can be shared across Nearatown. He distributed an outline listing the kinds of things to consider. Responses can be sent to Steve.Longmire@gmail.com. Asks for CAs to email him m responses. A copy of the Best Practices handout is attached.

- Nelson Vergel of Hyde Park mentioned the Facebook page that he has started with the idea of providing a forum for Montrose civic associations to communicate and invited others to join:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/527249034132552/>

- Lower Westheimer Corridor Pre-Engineering Study, Advisory Committee –

A stakeholder committee has been formed, including the Neartown President and presidents of civic associations along Westheimer. The objective is to take a pre-engineering look at what a reconstruction of Westheimer from Shepherd to the Spur might look like. Attached is a description and web link to the Study.

- Neartown Communication –

Greg acknowledged that the Neartown Association website is not up to date and he is concerned about it. He plans to spend some time looking at possible ways to better handle Neartown Communications.

Caroline Garry mentioned that Winlow Place uses Squarespace for the website, with Stripe integration for collecting dues, and MailChimp for email communications. These tools offer advantages in ease of use and maintenance.

3). Other –

A request was made to distribute soft copies of the handouts with the minutes

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.

- Submitted by Kay Warhol, Vice President

Enhanced Pre-Engineering Corridor Study: Westheimer Road— Shepherd Drive to Bagby Street



The Lower Westheimer Corridor Study is an enhanced pre-engineering study for Westheimer Road between Bagby Street and Shephard Drive. The enhanced pre-engineering process is applied to unique streets that merit an enhanced level of design sensitivity due to their historic, cultural, or community significance. Constructive collaboration between city departments, elected officials, community stakeholders, property owners and related interest groups is key in developing a preferred design approach that enhances the character of the corridor, improves mobility and that also engages the community.

Westheimer Road in the Montrose area is an important multi-modal corridor for vehicular traffic, public transportation, pedestrians, and other users. It also provides parking and servicing for adjacent land uses, and fulfills a variety of economic and social needs for area residents, property owners, business patrons, and others. The street alignment itself, including the 'Curves', the scale of the street and the surrounding buildings, and the eclectic development pattern are important aspects of the character of the corridor. It is both important and challenging to balance these sometimes competing functions, while also ensuring and promoting public safety, health, and welfare.

The Lower Westheimer Corridor Study is led by the City's Public Works and Engineering (PWE) and Planning and Development (P&D) Departments, and advised by a stakeholder advisory committee. This committee is representative of adjoining neighborhoods, local businesses, various government entities, non-profits, and other representatives. This nine-month corridor study is anticipated to be completed in November, 2016, and will provide several opportunities for community engagement, including two public meetings and a public workshop. The intent of the pre-engineering study for Lower Westheimer is to recommend a preferred design approach that considers the needs of the City and the community, meets the goals of ReBuild Houston, enhances the overall character of the street, and provide opportunity for a broad community engagement.

Neartown Civic Clubs

Current and Best Practices

Neartown has 18 member Civic Clubs, each of which has its own bylaws, dues structure, communications structure, and meeting schedule. This means that “the wheel” has been re-invented at least 18 times in search of that most elusive “best way”. Why not pool our experiences to see what works well and what does not with the ultimate goal of compiling a list of real world resources and solutions that we can all share to improve our neighborhood?

Common Civic Club Tasks

- Maintain a membership roster and contact list
 - Track membership and renewal
 - Disseminate information
 - Maintain critical contacts at City and local businesses
- Communicate Neighborhood News
 - Newsletters, flyers
 - Who produces, how often, how much cost
 - Online, printed, or both
 - How are they distributed
 - Website
 - Who produces, maintains, hosts the site
 - How often updated
 - “static” or “interactive”
 - What platform
 - WordPress
 - “Home brewed”
 - Custom commercial site
 - Do you have a mobile version – i.e. – for smart phones or tablets
 - Email
 - Who maintains list
 - Where is list maintained
 - Who has access to list
 - Hosted service (Zoho, Constant Contact, etc.)
 - Presence in online social media
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Nextdoor
 - Who maintains, “polices” your presence
 - Communications with City Council

- How is your Civic Club represented before City Council?
- Membership sign-up, dues, and renewals
 - Who is eligible to join
 - How are dues paid
 - Cash, check, credit or online
 - Mail
 - Online
 - What service do you use
 - How much does service cost
 - Membership drives, incentives
 - How do you market to new members
 - How do you encourage timely payment of renewals
 - How successful are your current methods
- State Comptroller Documents
 - Corporate Tax Forms
 - Sales Tax Exemption Forms
- Meetings and Events
 - How often do you have formal business meetings
 - How often do you have social events or meetings
 - Do you participate in National Night Out
 - Are your social events free or do you charge a fee
- Governance
 - How many Board Members do you have
 - How often are elections
 - On average how long does a Board Member serve
 - How do you recruit and train new Board Members
- Neighborhood Identity
 - Street Sign Toppers
 - Neighborhood Marquee Signs

Big Projects

Please list any “Big Projects” your Civic Club is or has been involved with. Examples – a CIP, establishing an Historic District, establishing, rehabbing, or maintaining a Park or community garden

Please answer these questions and email to Steve.Longmire@gmail.com, or bring answered forms to Neartown Meeting. We will compile the results to share and discuss once we have enough responses.

Thanks!

Neartown Association Attendance List

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	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u>
1	GREG LEGRANDE	NEARTOWN	glegrande@tgnbp.com	713 598 6291
2	NELSON VERGUL	Hyde Park	nelsonvergul@gmail.com	713 529 5205
3	Kathleen Schipper	Hyde Park	KathleenCanty@sbcglobal.net	
4	Tony Allender	Montrose M.D.	tallender@hhallp.com	832.483.1853
5	JACK WALINSKI	GOTI		
6	brooke Boylett	CM Cohen	districtc@houstontx.gov	
7	Sherry Wilson	EAST Montrose	sleefw@gmail.com	281-610-3985
8	STEVE LONGMIRE	FMC	STEVE.LONGMIRE@gmail.com	832-655-5657
9	Lloyd Matzner	NMCA	lmgmatz@sbcglobal.net	713-315-7141
10	Jake Mase	MPCA	jacob.mase@gmail.com	713 498 2667
11	PAUL TERRY	LPCA	paartet@gmail.com	512-779-8150
12	Caroline Garry	Window Place	carolinebgarry@gmail.com	512-659-4342
13	Dan PIETTE	Augustan Place	DPIETTE@gmail.com	713-922-3568
14	Carolyn Larrard	Overnat House 1/2		
15	Kay WANKOC			
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