**Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Association**

**General Meeting-April 6, 2017-Brody Middle School**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM by President George Davis. All Board members were present including: George Davis, Heather Carman Johnson (Treasurer), Ginny Renda (Secretary), Penny Harrison (Vice President), Julie Calder, Steve Utterson, Joe Harrison, Steve Sarcone, Jon Shelness, Darlene Blake and Nick Van Patten. Special guests were: Barb Baker (Park and Recreation), Lance Ripperger (Police Liaison Officer), Chris Hensley (City Council) and Scott Sanders (City Manager). Mayor Frank Cownie attended the meeting along with 114 neighborhood members.

Barb Baker informed neighbors about the Park and Recreation sponsored Easter Egg Hunt at Union Park on Saturday, April 8th.

Officer Ripperger reported that low crime rates continue in our neighborhood. Only eight crime events were reported last month. He did state items are being stolen from cars at Hy-Vee and Fleur Cinema which borders our neighborhood.

Connie Boesen reported 76% of Des Moines’s 33,000 students receive free or reduced lunch. Over 85 different languages are spoken. New school starting times were discussed, which generated much group discussion. The penny sales tax has made several schools improve energy cost in the area of heating and air-conditioning. Brody is slated to have remodeled science rooms, with every student having a computer. State money (1.1%) coming to Des Moines will mean no cuts, but some vacancies will not be filled. The District will not raise their portion of property tax.

Chris Hensley reported that the revitalization of SW 9th and MacRae Park are moving along well. The park will have a new enclosed shelter and the park entrance will overlook into the city. She reported that 40% of the land in Des Moines is property tax exempt. Budget concerns and city improvements will continue to be a problem. Any business would suffer with a 40% cut.

New traffic signals will be installed at SW 63rd and Creston as a result of neighborhood concerns at a previous meeting.

Scott Sanders reported Park Ave. will be widened from SW 63rd to the railroad tracks. George Flagg is also going to be resurfaced this spring. He explained the city’s position on Waterworks as it continues to be a concern. If suburban cities build their own water systems and do not buy water from Des Moines, we will pay the total cost of water and it will increase. A regional system benefits all with lower cost as we cannot afford to lose our customer base.

He answered many questions and concerns regarding street repair. Neighbors felt improvements were needed immediately across the city, especially on Fleur Drive and Park Ave.

The meeting was concluded at 8:38. Reported by Ginny Renda, Secretary.