

**SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD 22 COUNCIL AGENDA
NOVEMBER 9, 2009 MEETING**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Called to Order at 6:35 p.m.

II. Guests: At-Large Position 5 candidate and CM Jolanda Jones made brief remarks during which she emphasized her previous work with SN 22 on issues such as the recycling drop off center and Chapter 42.

At-Large Position 5 candidate for City Council Dr. Jack Christie made brief remarks to the attendees during which he emphasized that his platform is to listen and act in accord in what he hears and his experience in public service as chairman of the state board of education. Dr. Christie stated that he is seeking office in an effort to conduct efficiency audits, and to persuade a majority of the city council members to ask for efficiency audits.

At-Large Position 1 candidate for City Council Steve Costello made brief remarks during which he stressed his life history and experience as a civil engineer with expertise in drainage and development. He stated that he is named partner of an engineering firm with 110 employees who is not running as a politician, but as someone who's grateful to the community for the opportunity that he's received from this city. He provides group health insurance for his employees. When he's done serving the community he'll return to his engineering practice. His particular interests include public infrastructure, greenspace, and public safety. He advocates for detention but realizes that detention should be addressed on a regional basis rather than a project by project basis. He explained that individual site detention doesn't improve drainage and detracts from the tax base. How do you get individual small developers to participate? He suggests the establishment of an enterprise fund for streets and drainage like exists for water and sewer; i.e., a program that is more of a pay as you go program. He said that the problem is that politicians are reluctant to make that hard decision. His solution is a public referendum. Question from the audience: We have many codes and regulations and a lack of enforcement from PWE; what would you do to improve oversight from the city? Response: The problem is that we develop design criteria that we have no way of policing once done. Low impact development is a green way of mitigating for small development using bioswales or green swales but they require maintenance and they're ineffective as detention credit even though they do provide storm water quality features. He explained that council members have a difficult time micromanaging particular city departments, but stated that if elected he will help establish good public policy and he will work to insure that the city does not adopt policies are not enforceable.

At-Large Position 1 candidate for City Council Karen Derr made brief remarks during which she stressed her interest in neighborhood issues and commitment to using the SN structure to air community issues. Ms. Derr stated that these are the issues that hold our city back and on which she believes she can make a difference.

At-Large Position 4 CM Ronald Green who is a candidate for city controller made brief remarks to the attendees during which he spoke about the role that the city controller plays. He explained that although the controller doesn't have a lot of enforcement authority, that the controller can make sure that the rules and regulations on the books are valid and useful and that the city is performing the services for which the taxpayers pay, i.e., efficiency audits. He explained that this ability will be very important especially over the next year because the city is facing a funding gap that changes on a daily basis. He encouraged attendees to lengthen their Christmas list because the city relies largely on sales tax revenue to close the funding gap. He explained that one way to keep from getting into another gap situation is to go to Washington DC to get more money and to have a "hands on" controller, not just a "watch dog." Mr. Green stated that his personal occupation and experience is as an attorney with an MBA. He stated that he has the ability to renegotiate contracts, and that he has gained negotiating experience by successfully negotiating with FEMA and negotiating to redesign the city courts system to deliver better service. When asked how he would approach the job differently from the current controller, he stated that he'd be more aggressive in hands on contract negotiating and engaging more with outside firms to get better value for the city's money. As an example, he explained that the people who fix the streets and do the PW contracts are not city employees, but contractors. He also stated that he would work with the existing staff in the controller's office. He emphasized that the current controller is also a hands on controller, but that her background experience differs from his.

At-Large Position 2 candidate for City Council Andrew Burks made brief remarks during which he emphasized his willingness to work with the community to improve infrastructure, work with children to reduce crime, truancy, and drop out rates by improving their conflict resolution skills, and to create jobs by using federal funds to create a

job/business incubator program. He explained that he has his own business and has already had to downsize recently. He stated that the city demands new approaches to old problems. He stated that in the late 1980s Houston was the top city in the country for job creation and entrepreneurship but has since lost that position. He stated that he would work to reinstate the Houston Works program that was created by former Mayor Kathy Whitmire and was helped to diversify the local job market. He stated that the city has since become complacent and let that program lapse. He said that the city talks more about police and fire and that's where the bulk of the city funds are now spent. He stated that we focus too much on crime, and need new ideas to focus on what makes us a better city.

III. Consider and Approve Minutes from August 10, 2009 Meetings (5 minutes)

Rich Taylor moves and Patrick McIlvain seconds approval of the minutes. Motion carries unanimously.

IV. Presentation by Maverick Welsh, Neighborhood Centers, Inc. (15 minutes)

Hurricane Ike recovery program now being managed by Neighborhood Centers, Inc., is a long term case management program for Hurricane Ike survivors. Anyone with an Ike-related need should know about this program. The program has funding to help pay electricity bills as long as they're Ike related, but recognizes that there is still a three million dollar unmet funding need. Mr. Welsh explained that there are many agencies to help people; this program helps people connect with providers for needed services.

V. New Business (30 minutes)

A. Consider Meeting Location for 2010 (15 minutes)

JoAnn Schulman, director of the West End Multi-Service Center, told the attendees that the city administration (i.e., the mayor's office), has decided that SN 22 can no longer hold meetings at the West End Multi-Service Center. The following possibilities will be explored: Carol Limperos will explore the possibility of meeting at St. Theresa's Catholic Church; Phyllis Thomason will explore the possibility of meeting at Depelchin; and Jane West and Phyllis Thomason will explore the possibility of meeting at the United Way. If the SN is unable to secure a meeting location that does not require payment of a fee, the SN will be forced to request funds from its constituent members to cover the cost of the meeting location.

B. Application for Extending MKT Hike and Bike Trail to the West (15 minutes)

Tom Dornbusch reported that TxDOT has funding for projects that are sponsored by a governmental entity, and can be initiated within a short time frame. He, Mary Jane Buschlen, and others from the Cottage Grove community have been working together to establish reasonable cost estimates for the purpose of submitting an application for extending the MKT hike and bike trail west beyond Shepherd. Tom explained that the effort would not be in vain even if it is not completed in time to submit for this round of funding because the application can be resubmitted when additional funding becomes available in the future. Tom and Mary Jane explained that the city purchased the MKT ROW for the purpose of extending the hike and bike trail west. One impediment is that the area is not all in District H, but is also in District A, and that the support of the District A councilmember is still lacking.

VI. Old Business (35 minutes)

A. Recycling Drop Off Facility (5 minutes)

Carlos Doroteo from CM Ed Gonzalez' office announced that the mayor's administration intends to renew its proposal to sell the land at the intersection of Harvard and Center Street currently used as a recycling drop off facility, and that in an effort to gain council approval for the proposed sale will take this issue to the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee chaired by CM Ann Clutterbuck prior to placing it on city council's agenda. Carlos explained that CM Ed Gonzalez has asked the administration to come to the table and discuss the issues with the community. The tentative date for consideration by the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee is December 1st. At that meeting the Solid Waste department is expected to make a presentation that will be followed by an opportunity for public comment. The committee meeting will be held in the city council chamber.

B. Spec's Controversy (5 Minutes)

Jane West announced that instead of going forward with a scheduled administrative hearing, Spec's agreed to surrender its licenses for its Washington Avenue locations.

- C. Safety Zone/Quiet Zone (5 minutes)**
Carlos Doroteo from CM Ed Gonzalez' office announced that Jeff Weatherford, director of transportation for the city's PWE department, recently met with CM Gonzalez to brief him on the comments received from the public about the city's proposal to close the railroad intersections at Bonner and Thompson, and that Jeff Weatherford and his team are planning to hold an informational meeting at which the results of that public comment period will be made public. Carlos stated that the Quiet Zone effort is expected to move forward with due speed after that meeting is held. Jane West volunteered the meeting time and space reserved for the SN's December meeting as a possible time for the informational meeting on this issue.
- D. Planning Department's Matrix: (5 minutes)**
Carlos Doroteo from CM Ed Gonzalez' office announced that the Planning Department and the Parking Management Department are finally ready to present their proposed plan for parking signage, parking meters, and taxi zones in the Washington Avenue Corridor. Carlos stated that he met with Marlene Gafrick and Liliana Rambo and that they are both trying to decide if they want to wait until the next SN meeting to announce the plan or hold an independent meeting sooner.
- E. Proposed Amendments to Chapter 42 (5 minutes)**
Tom Dornbusch and Jane West stated that there has been no movement on this issue.
- F. W/Ave Residential Parking Permit Initiative (5 minutes)**
Phyllis Thomason stated that Rice Military applications for inclusion in the RPP are moving forward and that a public hearing on these applications will be held on Thursday, November 19th, at the West Gray Multi-Service Center at 5:30 p.m.
- G. Valet Parking Ordinance Amendments (5 minutes)**
No change.

VI. On Going Project Updates (30 minutes)

- A. Area Business Owners Committee (5 minutes)**
Paul Nicosia announced that the next meeting will be held at the Corkscrew, and that Rene Zamore has resigned from her position as co-chair of this group.
- B. Olivewood Cemetery (5 minutes)**
Due to lack of time update postponed.
- C. Candidate Forums Recap: (15 minutes)**
Due to lack of time update postponed.
- D. Transportation Committee: (5 minutes)**
Due to proximity to the Thanksgiving holiday, November meeting will be held on the third monday of the month instead of the fourth Monday.

VII. Announcements, Community Reports, and Open Comments (5 minutes)

Keep Houston Beautiful Mayor's Proud Partners Awards Luncheon, Monday, November 16th, will honor SN 22 Organizations, including WOW Roundabout and Descendants of Olivewood

Art on the Avenues, Saturday Evening November 14th, Winter Street Studios

Washington Wave Jitney has started operation. Owner Lauren Barrash announced that she has rented Lot H from the City of Houston (located at SW corner of Houston Avenue and Memorial Drive intersection next to Fonde Recreation Center), and that there is no charge for the parking, only for riding on the shuttle. In the near future there will be a discount for residents of the ten area neighborhoods and that a portion of the revenue will be invested in community projects. Hours of operation are 6:00 pm to 3:00 am Thursday Friday and Saturday. Ms. Barrash stated that she has one vehicle in operation, that she expects to have two vehicles in operation by the end of the month, and

that she expects to have three vehicles in operation soon thereafter. Cars parked in Lot H will not be towed or ticketed on weekends even if left overnight. Ms. Barrash stated that her vehicles are allowed to stop anywhere on the route, and that this ability is part of what distinguishes a jitney from a bus. She also explained that a jitney is a fixed route, fixed rate shuttle that operates in a circle capable of carrying more than four passengers but less than 15. She is operating 15-passenger buses with automatic doors. Every bar website has a link to free parking showing where Lot H is located. There are 450 spaces in the Lot H and the shuttle is \$5 per ride or \$8 per night. All night is a wristband one ticket is a one ticket. There will eventually be cards for residents. A ribbon cutting ceremony with CM Sue Lovell and CM Ed Gonzalez, as well as representatives from the Parking Management and Public Works Departments and area business owners is planned for Nov. 20th in front of the Corkscrew. Please plan to attend..

VIII. Adjournment at 8: 30 p.m.