

I want to thank Susannah for the kind introduction and for the opportunity to be here today. This dedication is very exciting and I welcome the creation of this art district. I believe that it will enhance the reputation of this area and bring more visitors into the core of the city of Houston.

I have lived in the 6th ward since 1994 and when my wife, who is an artist and has shown her work at many shows at Winter Street and other galleries in the area throughout these years, and I first moved here many of our friends and family questioned that decision. The area was a little rough and some thought scary. But we saw the great potential that was here. We saw the wonderful historic houses, we saw the great views of the sky line, we saw the advantage of living close in and not having to spend so much time on the freeway and being able to bike or walk to many of the attractions, events and parks that Houston had to offer. But you know what really sealed the deal? It was the people that lived here. They were excited about not just being here but in working together as a team and in making this area better. Not just seeing the potential but wanting to help create a place in the shadows of downtown that would be fun and safe for our kids, and exciting with lots of activities and opportunities to learn and grow. A place to call home. Since then we have worked hard to create a better place. We called on the city council to help us protect the character of our neighborhood and they did. They passed an ordinance that prevented the demolition of our historic houses. We saw the building of the baseball stadium in the downtown. We saw the downtown area become a night time destination. We saw lots of great people move into the old houses and restore them. We saw a world class skate park built. We saw restaurants and coffee shops and night clubs open on Washington Avenue. We saw new apartments and shopping centers being built. We saw Buffalo Bayou Park being improved with trails and bike paths. When many large cities saw decline and decay taking over their inter city areas we saw revitalization. And before we knew it we had parking problems, and we ask the city to help and they did. They worked with the neighborhoods along Washington to create parking districts, provide police patrols and helped protect the quality of life that was being created here.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have worked the extra hours, after coming home from work and on weekends, to help pull all of this together. I want to thank the city of Houston that has worked with us on this long road of recreation. I want to thank the business owners who were willing to invest time and money to create new places to visit and to go shopping. And I want to thank Susannah for the work she is doing to bring this art district to life in our neighborhood. I think it is very appropriate that this area becomes an art district because artists are creative and use their imaginations to see what can be and are willing to work to make it happen. To date we have been blessed with that artistic vision and I am looking forward to what we can become in the future. Thank you.