

Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA)

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on April 17, 2021

Thirteen board members were in attendance including:

- Mary Harrison, Social events, HOC
- James Fairchild, VP
- Brett Anderson, Communications
- Alex Hernandez, Beautification
- Corey Miles, Crime Watch Chair
- Jam Gregory, Code compliance
- Lucy Livingston, Past President
- Richard Thomas, Secretary
- Beatrice Lovett, Treasurer
- Lynn Witherspoon, Education Chair
- Tom Forsyth, President
- Matt Canto, Grants Chair
- Petre White, Block Captain Chair for OPE North

Tom Forsyth, OPENA president, called the board meeting to order at 1:29 PM on Saturday, April 17. As the first order of business, he welcomed Matthew Canto as the new Grants Chair. Matt Canto greeted the board and thanked them for confirming him as Grants Chair.

Reports:

Tom Forsyth, President:

- Tom then gave a report on the Heritage Oak Cliff (HOC) grants meeting, which he attended instead of Matt. Because of the pandemic shutdown, HOC is extending community building grants for an extra year, so our \$500 grant from last year can still be used. Tom asked for new grant proposal suggestions, while mentioning that HOC has less money available now because of suspension of fundraising activities.
- Tom announced that the joint OPENA/Kiestwood cleanup drive will be held on May 8 and May 9 and asked for volunteers to sign up.

James Fairchild, Vice President:

- James serves as our HOC liaison. He reported that the HOC budget for grants this year is \$30,000 (while Tom heard at the Grant Workshop that it is only half that amount).
- HOC is holding a Social Event for neighborhood leaders on April 21. However, the event is restricted to paid members of HOC.

Beatrice Lovett, Treasurer:

- Due to the absence of Beatrice Lovett, the treasurer, Tom gave the treasurer's report. Highlights included a mention of the \$650 filing and application fee for the 501(c)4 application, three new members, and a closing balance of \$3,427.17.

Richard Thomas, Secretary:

- The minutes for the March 20 OPENA general meeting were read by Richard and approved by the board.

Brett Anderson, Communications Chair:

- Brett gave an update on the OPENA website and Facebook page. The leadership page on the website has been updated, and the recent OPENA forum with the District 4 city council candidates has been posted on the OPENA Facebook page.
- The OPENA general meeting on Tuesday, May 18, 6:30-8:00 PM, will be accessible both through Zoom and OPENA's Facebook page. The program will be given by Carl Simpson, head of the City of Dallas Code Compliance Department.

Alex Hernandez, Beautification Chair:

- Alex announced that he was resigning that OPENA board position due to a new job as community prosecutor for District 8 to avoid a possible conflict of interest. He stated that he would be willing to work with OPENA on code compliance issues in an unofficial way.
- There was a brief discussion of possibly establishing a preservation committee. At Tom's suggestion, any action on that was deferred for further consideration.

Corey Miles, Crime Watch Chair:

- Corey reported that anyone who applied for the Volunteer in Patrol (VIP) training needs to reapply. New classes are being transitioned online at this time.
- Corey reported that he had asked again about the quarterly meeting that used to be held with a neighborhood legal representative to discuss matters that may require litigation to resolve. Officer Martinez was not aware of such meetings and stated that the only meetings that officers attend currently are the association meetings. Alex Hernandez said that he would investigate the matter and work with Corey on getting more details.
- Because the Dallas Police Department is filling some of the open positions left by caused by promotions and transfers, we are seeing more street patrols. These increased street patrols have disrupted the street racing. There have been many arrests, and the racing appears to be reducing in some of the trouble spots.
- Updated costs for Volunteer Patrol materials will be sent to Tom and added to the grant.

James “Jam” Gregory, Code Compliance Chair:

- Jam listed multiple types of code violations and asked about enforcement measures that OPENA could take. Tom clarified that we are a neighborhood association, not a homeowner’s association, and have no enforcement powers. We can only try to educate our residents about the code rules. A very extended discussion followed, with Tom opposing the idea of OPENA sending letters of noncompliance to residents. This action would create ill will toward OPENA without being effective in ending the violations. Lynn Witherspoon suggested that individual OPENA members submit service requests on 311 and/or call the Code Team at the Southwest Office. It is more effective when multiple complaints on a single code violation have been submitted to Code.
- Jam volunteered that Code has an inspector who works on Saturday. The inspector is Robert Moore. His phone numbers are: 469-515-1036 (office) and 214-670-1980 (home)

Cynthia White, Community Planning and Development Chair:

- In Cynthia’s absence, Tom mentioned that there would be public tours of the small museum at Dallas Executive Airport. Information about that and the airshow at DEA will be forthcoming.
- The Dallas Executive Airport will have a public meeting on Tuesday May 18 at 6:30.

Lynn Witherspoon, Education Chair:

- Lynn posts the Dallas Public Library’s LibraryAware bulletin on OPENA’s Facebook page.
- Lynn published an article on Judy Pollack’s house on OPENA’s Facebook page
- Lynn’s photos of Five Mile Creek were also posted on our Facebook page.

Old Business:

- Tom mentioned that OPENA’s 501(c)4 status, once granted, will require a statement of income received which we currently do not have to provide.

New Business:

- Tom nominated Paula Cantrell as the new Publications Chair. Lynn Witherspoon seconded the nomination. The vote to confirm Paula was 10-0. The vote was conducted by email on April 29 but added to the April meeting minutes so it appears in our records.
- Jam brought up the question of what “affordable housing” might mean in our neighborhood. Members asked about the new 14-unit apartment complex that Johnny Aguinaga is building on Navajo Rd. Tom agreed to set up a future meeting with Johnny so Board members can learn more about the plans for this development.

Tom adjourned the meeting at 3:10 PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,
Lynn Witherspoon
(on behalf of Richard Thomas)
April 29, 2021