

Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA)

Minutes of GENERAL MEETING on January 18, 2020

The general meeting and luncheon took place on January 18th, 2020 at the St. Augustine's Episcopal Church. The business meeting was preceded by a lunch served by the St. Augustine's Church family.

President Tom Forsyth called the business meeting to order at 1:30 pm and we received a welcome by Mother Emily Hylden, Vicar of the St. Augustine church.

Tom Forsyth introduced residents who agreed to serve in OPENA leadership positions for the coming year:

- Lynn Witherspoon Education Chair
- Cory Miles Code Compliance & Crime Watch
- Kathy Biers Membership
- Jack Dieckhoner Beautification

Tom recognized and provided Certificates of Appreciation to Carol Jackson, Bert Rakowitz and Jim Hauck for the of their work on behalf of OPENA during the past year.

Pertinent announcements were:

1. The Yard of the Month program was restarted again in 2019. The current recipient of the Yard of the Month

Award is Michael and Sheila Smith, who live at the corner of Rugged and Vatican

2. There will be another cleanup campaign on February 8th, 2020 and we will implement a quarterly cleanup program
3. The program for the next meeting of OPENA in March will focus on healthy food choices for the southern sector of Dallas.
4. A free lunch is provided by St. Augustine's Church on the third Saturday of each month.

Next came the reports by the various committees:

- Richard Thomas, Secretary, read the minutes for the November meeting. A motion to adopt was made by Jim Hauck and seconded by Lynn Witherspoon. Members voted to approve the minutes as presented.
- The treasurer's report prepared by Beatrice Lovett, Treasurer, showed that as of December 31st, 2019 we had a total of \$2205.00 in the bank.
- Alex Gorinsky, the outgoing Membership Chair, noted that OPENA had 61 paying members in 2019. Alex reported that we start 2020 with 25 renewals & 3 new members.
- Jim Hauck, Communications and Technology Chair, gave an update on all of the new features of the website. He

invited residents to see all the changes by visiting our website at: www.opena.org.

- Tom Forsyth announced that an OPENA Neighborhood Handbook & Directory was being developed. The current plan is to distribute the handbook as an electronic file.

Two candidates for the House District 30 race in the Democratic Primary were present and each were given about a minute to introduce themselves. The candidates were Hasani Burton and Shanita Cleveland.

D4 Councilwoman Carol King Arnold also addressed the residents at our meeting. She noted the need for more public safety officers and encouraged members to attend the Listening Session with Chief Renee Hall that will be held at the Beckley-Saner Recreation Center at 6 pm CDT on February 20th, 2020.

The significant topics that were discussed at the meeting included:

1. A presentation by Abidur Khan of the Stormwater Management department. He updated residents on the issue of erosion at Five Mile Parkway and Holiday Road. He stated that the issue was serious in that the base soil was not firm. As such, the bed of the creek had to be reinforced. Current timelines are that the design phase will

be completed by February 2020, bids are to be awarded by summer of 2020, and expected completion will be Fall of 2020. Total cost for the project will be \$ 424,000. At this price point, the project will be packaged with other projects to ensure completion in a timely manner.

2. Isaac Ellison of the Red Bird Airport reported on a flight tracker program named Casper that allows residents to track flights in and out of Red Bird Airport. This tool is now linked to our website for ease of use.

The main program for the January meeting was a presentation titled “Advancing Equity in Dallas” that was given by Victor Obaseki, the Equity Officer for the City of Dallas. He stated that the office was created in 2018 by combining Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity departments. The role of his office is to reduce disparities while improving outcomes for all. He was careful to make the distinction between equity and equality. He noted that current research showed that race and socio-economic condition were predictors of wellness. The role of his office was to analyze policies and procedures to ensure they were equitable. The concept of ‘redlining’ was the result of government actions in coordination with private enterprises. These policies served to create pockets of isolated communities based on race. The equity office will work with city departments to use the budget process as an equity tool. Mr. Obaseki expects the

display on “Undesigning the Redline” to be returning to Dallas in the near future.

All three presentations given at the meeting will be posted to the OPENA Website page along with the Minutes of our November 2019 General Meeting and the December 2019 Board meetings.

At the end of the meeting, OPENA recognized Pastor Walker of the Willow Grove Baptist Church who presented a plan for a Beautification Project in the median along Kiest Blvd. that is directly in front of his church. Tom Forsyth promised to look at his proposal and to bring it before the OPENA Board of Directors for consideration.

The business meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Submitted,

Richard Thomas, Secretary

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Serving the Oak Park Estates and Druid Hills Neighborhoods