**Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association**

**Minutes of the General Meeting on July 21,2020**

This meeting was held virtually using a zoom link.

The meeting started at 6:30 pm with 67 attendees. President Tom Forsyth welcomed everyone and made mention of special guests. These included Councilwoman Carolyn Arnold, District 4 Representative; Crystal Ross, Assistant Director of Dallas Parks and Recreation; Chief Jesse Reyes, DPD Southwest; Chief Clifton Knight, City of Dallas Marshalls Office. To facilitate speakers who had other engagements, the business issues of OPENA were moved to the end of the meeting.

Residents heard from Chief Jesse Reyes of the South Patrol Division. Chief Reyes stated that he served in Dallas Police Department for 36 years, fifteen years as a Deputy Chief and as Chief of Southwest for the last five months. While he had not yet met many community members, he welcomed the opportunity to serve and appreciates any input from the community. Chief Reyes stated that crime stats in the City overall were down 3.6% but aggravated assaults remain a challenge. These assaults occurred mostly in multifamily environments and involved gun shots. Chief Reyes encouraged residents to continue to report incidents of crime so that resources can be allocated to handle the problems.

**Crime Watch:**

Crime watch Chair, Corey Miles tabled his comments and allowed the officers to inform us on crime issues. Other members of the Southwest division were Brian Martinez, Stephanie Leal, Reuben Lorenzo, and Sergeant Lambert. These officers collectively reported on the crime stats in the Oak Park Estates and Druid Hills neighborhoods.

They stated that in the last three months there were three crimes: two were package theft and one was burglary of a storage unit. The material in the storage unit was recovered.

Ruben Lorenzo reported on the Volunteers in Patrol Program (VIP). At this time, the program has been suspended due to COVID concerns. However, they were still taking applications in anticipation of the restart. He suggested that residents take the Community Policing class which is held over four weeks class in addition to the VIP program. The VIP class lasts for four hours and instructs residents on patrolling and how to report criminal activity. Officer Martinez said an efficient way to report crime is using the DallasPolice.net website. It provides pertinent data to include the “who, what, where and when”. He said that crime in the Southwest was up by 1.6% and most were property crimes. He also reported on the vandalism at Kiest Park and Hampton-Illinois library. Due to the criminal activity around Kiest Park, Martinez promised that the DPD Central Office will assist the Southwest NPO in the formation of a task force to focus on crime in the Kiest-Polk and Polk-HWY 67 areas.

Councilperson Arnold offered comments on crime. With respect current topic of defunding the police, she does not support it. She prefers to focus on the “Dallas Safe 365” initiative. Additionally, since resources are usually linked to population data, she will focus her efforts on census registration. She asked residents to provide her office with input, advice, and feedback.

**Code issues**:

Fabian Ramirez, the Neighborhood Code Representative, gave an update on the new Bulky Trash restrictions which begin in July. Residents will be limited to putting out up to 10 cubic feet of materials that allows to be included in bulky trash. A resident can apply for a once a year exception of up to 20 cubic feet, but they must file 311 requests with the city to get approval for the exception. Mr. Ramirez also reported on the city’s efforts to help us fight the illegal dumping activity that has been occurring at 3744 Legendary Lane.

Chief Knight of the City Marshalls Office spoke about their efforts to inform and educate the residents of nearby apartments about the penalties of illegal dumping. He says there are multiple cameras that have been installed along W Pentagon Parkway and Legendary to help catch the violators in the act of dumping materials at this site. In fact, they caught someone who lives nearby who was dumping tree limbs at the site on Monday July 20.

**Parks and Recreation:**

Crystal Ross, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation expanded on the topic of vandalism at Kiest Park. She reported that the break-in occurred between July 4th and July 12th. The damage was limited to broken glass and fire extinguisher spray. The cost to repair the damage was estimated at $60,000. The Department was contemplating adding additional exterior lighting, hiring a security firm to provide additional patrols, and having Park Rangers patrol the park twice on weekdays.

**Business:**

Tom Forsyth informed us that T-shirts were available for order. At present we had thirty -one orders. The official order will be placed on August 1st,2020.

Richard Thomas presented the minutes for the May meeting. Judy Pollock moved that they be approved. Alex seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Beatrice Lovell presented the Treasurer’s report that showed a balance of $2968.99.

Kathy Birks, Membership Chair, reported that OPENA had 7 new and renewing members in July which brings OPENA total members to 49.

The next meeting will be on September 15th, 2020. Anga Sanders will speak on the topic of ‘Food Deserts in Southern Dallas’.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Submitted

Richard Thomas, Secretary

Oak Park Estates Neighborhood Association (OPENA)

August 10, 2020