

**Guests:**

Leigh Killgore, SN14-Lazybrook/Timbergrove

Kay Walton, SN62-Midtown

Mark Williamson, SN15-Greater Heights

Dexter Handy, Citizens Transportation Coalition

Tony Buzbee, Mayoral Candidate

Greg Meyers, SN24-Montrose/Nearatown

Pastor Tim Engel, Messiah Lutheran Church

John Froelich, Messiah Lutheran Church

Linda Trevino, METRO Public Affairs

Sherry Weesner, TIRZ 5 & 13

Abbie Kamin, District C Candidate

Letitia Plummer, At-Large 4 Candidate

Anthony Dolcefino, At-Large 4 Candidate

Penny Morales-Shaw, Garden Oaks

Austin Stelter, Raj Salhotra Campaign

Gerald Fuentes, Tony Buzbee Campaign

Nick Baker, Tony Buzbee Campaign

Monica Campos, Commissioner Adrian Garcia

Marcel McClinton, Janaeya Carmouche Campaign

Jordan Thomas, Amanda Edwards Campaign

Lowell Davis, House District 18

Shelley Kennedy, District C Candidate

Debra Denny, Shelley Kennedy Campaign

Emma Whalen, Community Impact Newspaper

Patrick Fontana, Abbie Kamin Campaign

John Stolz, Anthony Dolcefino Campaign

Brantly Minor, Discovery Consultants

**Civic Club Representatives:**

Steve Vealey, Camp Logan/SN22 Vice-President

Mike VanDusen, Crestwood/SN22 President

Dori Boone, First Ward

Tania Rivas, First Ward

Paul Nicosia, Magnolia Grove

Jane West, Old Sixth Ward

Stacie Fairchild, Rice Military/SN22 Secretary

Mark Fairchild, Rice Military

Joan Miller, Rice Military

Dexter Handy, Rice Military

Mauri Lucas, West End

**Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.**

**I. Introductions:** Municipal candidates Tony Buzbee for Mayor, Raj Salhotra - At-Large, Position 1, Willie Davis - At-Large Candidate, Position 2, and Letitia Plummer - At-Large Candidate, Position 4, shared their platforms.

**II. Acceptance of Minutes from Meeting Held on July 18, 2019**

**III. Presentation A: TIRZ 5 Transportation Update– Sherry Weesner**

Sherry Weesner began by sharing that TIRZs (Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone) are special zones created by City Council to attract new investment in an area. These zones help finance costs of redevelopment and promote growth in areas that would otherwise not attract sufficient market development in a timely manner. Taxes attributable to new improvements (tax increments) are set-aside in a fund to finance public improvements within the boundaries of the zone. Each TIRZ is managed by a board of directors appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. Every budget and CIP (Capital Improvement Project) the board creates and recommends is discussed with Public Works then approved by City Council. [Memorial Heights Redevelopment Authority/TIRZ 5](#) is focused on a number of mobility projects that improve all urban transit modes; Shepherd/Durham, Heights BLVD/MKT/Spring Street Trail, Houston Avenue and White Oak intersection, White Oak Connection to Memorial Park, and the North Canal Project. As for the Shepherd/Durham project, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded a \$25M grant for upgrades to Shepherd/Durham between 15th Street and 610 Loop North, that include improvements to safety, traffic flow, drainage, and transit options. Completion of the project is expected in 2025 under the supervision of TIRZ 5, whose contribution of an additional \$25M in property tax revenue brings the cost to a total of \$50M. TIRZ 5 applied for the grant with the support of the city, local organizations and elected officials at the federal, state and municipal levels. The project will provide better traffic flow through the addition of turning lanes at designated intersections, a designated bike lane, improved sidewalks, drainage upgrades, and better Metro transit stops. The next step will be to go to HGAC (Houston Area Galveston Council) to obtain grant money to continue the upgrades from 15th street to I-10. TIRZ 5 worked with the City of Houston and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department to reconfigure the intersection of Houston Avenue at White Oak Drive to alleviate driver confusion, improve crossing conditions for pedestrians/cyclists, and improve connectivity to all amenities surrounding the intersection. The improvements included closure of a short block of Wrightwood west of Houston Avenue and reclamation of the area as a gateway park, realignment of the intersection, installation of new roadway surfaces, reconstruction of sidewalks, installation of new traffic signals, and the installation of a 10-foot wide shared path north of the project to connect to Woodland Park. The project also included the re-establishment and extension of dedicated bike lanes at the intersection and south over Interstate 10 to Spring Street, allowing the connection of pedestrians and cyclists to the White Oak Bayou Trail and the MKT Trail. The North Canal project is possible because the City of Houston received a grant from FEMA to build the North and South Canal, which will allow a flooding reduction for White Oak and Buffalo Bayous. In addition, the City of Houston, TXDOT, Harris County Flood Control, and TIRZ 5 are contributing money. TIRZ 5 is putting in \$25M to redesign support for two bridges (Heights and Yale), the railroad bridge, and channel improvements. [TIRZ 5 Slide Presentation](#)

**Presentation B: Comfort Dog Ministry – Messiah Lutheran Church, Pastor Tim Engel**

Pastor Tim Engel began by introducing his Golden Retriever, Gabriel. The Comfort Dog Ministry—a national human-care ministry embracing the unique, calming nature and skills of purebred Golden Retrievers—was launched in August 2008 in the greater Chicago area with four dogs by the [Lutheran Church Charities](#). (The program now has approximately 130 dogs nationwide.) The goal is to show hospitality to strangers in a time of need. Training begins at eight weeks old for an 18-month period. The dogs are then placed in Lutheran churches to assist in local caring and outreach ministries. Teams are deployed together in response to natural and man-made disasters such as school shootings, bombings, and hurricanes. Gabriel (the Comfort Dog) is the first of three Comfort Dogs in the Greater Houston area, and was placed at [Messiah Lutheran Church](#) in the Rice Military neighborhood in the fall of 2017. Since then, he has been instrumental in 11 disaster deployments including the Santa Fe, TX shooting. Gabriel returns to the high school often. You may follow Gabriel on social media via Facebook ([Gabriel Comfort Dog](#)), Instagram ([lckk9Gabriel](#)), and donate to his ministry fund; checks payable to *Messiah Lutheran Church, Memo Comfort Dog*. Address: 816 Roy Street, Houston, TX 77007. [Hospitality to Strangers Presentation](#)

**IV. New Business:**

**A. Casual Conversation with District C Runoff Candidates:** Shelley Kennedy and Abbie Kamin shared their platforms with SN22 voters competing for term-limited Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Cohen’s position on Houston City Council.

**B. AARP Walk Audit Schedules:** Mike VanDusen (Crestwood/SN22 President) informed everyone that SN22’s first walk audit is scheduled for Saturday, December 11 from 9:00-11:00 am. The team will assess the walkability of sidewalks and streets in our community. The Washington Roundabout will be the test case where participants learn how to examine intersections, sidewalks, driver behavior, public safety, and more. The information will be given to elected officials and other local leaders when advocating for safe street features such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and properly timed traffic lights. Mike asked anyone interested in participating on December 11 or in future walk audits to send an email to [superneighborhood22@gmail.com](mailto:superneighborhood22@gmail.com).

**C. Municipal Voting Information:** Stacie Fairchild (Rice Military/SN22 Secretary) shared Early Voting and Election Day information.

**V. Old Business:**

**A. Bicycle Advisory Committee:** Mike VanDusen (Crestwood/SN22 President) added that the latest update was [July 24, 2019](#).

**B. Planning Commission Updates:** Mike VanDusen (Crestwood/SN22 President) mentioned there was one application on November 14, 2019: 6010 Rose, 19110647, DPV, Crestwood. This is a development plat with a variance request for the northwest corner of Rose and Westcott. The applicant is asking to build an open patio cover that will be 10’ from a major thoroughfare, which normally requires 25’. The home is in a

subdivision platted prior to Westcott being built. The platting along the Westcott ROW required a 10' setback to accommodate a utility easement. The variance is consistent with existing build lines, and other recently granted variances along Westcott.

**C. Quality of Life Updates:** Stacie Fairchild (Rice Military/SN22 Secretary) shared that eight new bars will open in 2020 on Washington Avenue. The same issues still exist as discussed each month.

**D. City Council and Department Updates:** No Update

**E. Super Neighborhood Alliance:** No Update

**VI. Announcements, and Open Comments:** Monica Campos, Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia's Community Liaison, announced Precinct 2 is offering unpaid internships in the Spring. This is a good opportunity for anyone looking to fulfill certain college/university requirements and gain experience. The deadline to apply is February 3, 2020. Please send a letter of interest, resume, and unofficial transcript to [alma.galvan@pct2.hctx.net](mailto:alma.galvan@pct2.hctx.net).

**VII. Upcoming Events of Community Interest:** No announcements

**VIII. Motion to Adjourn:** 8:45 p.m.

Next meeting: February 20, 2020 @ 6:30 PM.