**SOUTHWESTERN HILLS GENERAL MEETING**

**APRIL 27, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by President George Davis. Board members present included George Davis, Nick VanPatten, Ginny Renda, John Shelness, Penny Harrison, Steve Sarcone, Steve Utterson and Joe Harrison. 90+ SWHNA residents were present for the meeting. City/County officials presented plans and projects important to the neighborhood.

**SGT. DOUA LOA, DMPD**

Sgt. Doua Loa is assigned to the neighborhood replacing an officer on medical leave.. He gave members his telephone number 212-971-0792. Neighbors may call for non-threatening/non-emergency issues. He discussed traffic problems, youth programs, and National Night Out. He asked neighbors to lock their cars and not leave guns in them. He mentioned that Vacation Watch was available for people leaving town. He presented needed information regarding safety.

**CONNIE BOESEN, AT LARGE CITY COUNCIL**

Stormwater in Des Moines is managed by the Clean Water Program. The City of Des Moines has a Stormwater Best Management Practices Program which will reimburse property owners 50% of the cost up to $2000 for qualified work that reduces stormwater runoff on their property. She addressed continuing water problem issues for neighbors.

**CARL VOSS, AT LARGE CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Voss brought speed signs to the meeting that neighbors could put in their yards to slow down cars. The signs had humorous statements and were well received. He talked about the City of Des Moines Forestry Program that included planting trees all over the city. He also mentioned The Adopt a Tree Program. Mr. Voss mentioned that RAGBRAI would be coming to Des Moines on July 26 and leaving on July 27. Our neighborhood will be impacted because riders will be camping at Water Works Park and there will also parties in the downtown area. A record number of riders could set a record. Traffic on Fleur Drive will be busy and additional police officers will be on duty.

**JOSH MANDELBAUM, WARD 3 CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Mandelbaum announced that improvements at MacRae Park would soon be finished. He also told the audience about Vision Zero, a program that is expected to reduce traffic fatalities. This program’s goal is to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safety. He talked about the City’s Climate Action Plan aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**MATT MCOY, POLK COUNTY SUPERVISOR**

Mr. McCoy shared the County’s program to assist low-income families to get better housing. He discussed the partnership between the City of Des Moines and Polk County to provide mental health and addiction services at Broadlawns Hospital. He also said that Polk County is planning to invest in clean water and cover crops to deal with climate change and global warming. The County is working with Des Moines Water Works.

**SCOTT SANDERS, DM CITY MANAGER**

The City Manager said that property assessments were 95 to 105 percent of what properties sell for. The new assessments would not be used for property taxes until 2024 and property taxes would probably only go up 3%. Mr. Sanders discussed the City’s problem of homelessness. He said that the city hired a staff person who will focus on homelessness. He talked about Vision Zero and how it should improve the safety on our streets. The audience wanted to know why the police could not stop panhandlers from begging on our streets. The reason given was that panhandlers were protected under the First Amendment according to the Supreme Court, but in certain situations, the police can have them move for safety. A majority of members present want the concrete speed barrier removed on Stanton Ave.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

After the City/ County Officials spoke, there was time for members to ask questions. Many questions were presented and answered regarding homeless camps, street beggars, street conditions, and the cities’ role in property evaluations. City/County officials addressed many individual questions after the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting concluded around 8:15 pm

The next open Board meeting is May 15, 2023

Minutes Submitted by Ginny Renda