

**SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD 22 COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES
March 8, 2010 MEETING**

- I. Meeting Called to Order (5 minutes)**
II. Consider and Approve Minutes from February 8, 2010 Meeting (5 minutes)

J. Martinez moved and P. Thomason seconded approval of the minutes, motion passed unanimously.

- III. Presentations (60 minutes):**

A. At-Large Position 1 CM Stephen Costello: Chairman of City Council's Flooding and Drainage Committee

City Council's Flooding and Drainage Committee is considering revisions to Chapters 19 and 47, the flooding and storm discharge chapters of the City Code of Ordinances. CM Costello's focus is long range funding for public infrastructure that is estimated to be grossly underfunded, i.e., 60% of the infrastructure is estimated to be beyond its useful life and to cost \$10B to fix. The city fixes only 3% of the infrastructure annually, and in 20 years 80% of the city's infrastructure is expected to be beyond its useful life. The city's infrastructure is the foundation of our lives and our city. The annual budget for infrastructure replacement is approximately \$40M and comes from water and sewer bills. In his opinion, streets and drainage should be the subject of an enterprise fund, i.e., a dedicated stream of revenue. CM Costello explained that how the city funds infrastructure in the long term presents a serious problem. In two years the city is not expected to be funding any more drainage improvements. Over the next year, the Flooding and Drainage Committee will hold meetings in each council district and these out-of-downtown-meetings will be held during evening hours. Most committees meet between 10 and 3 when people work. The Flooding and Drainage committee intends to hold a series of town hall meetings in each council district to facilitate exchange of information between the council members and the community. Houston is known as a place that floods all the time, and that is not the moniker city residents want to have. In 1984 there was a design change intended to keep water out of our houses. Now the city is struggling with how to keep older neighborhoods from flooding; an effort that requires streets to be regraded. The flooding and drainage survey form does not supplant 311 calls. Top priorities will be how to prevent ponding, structural flooding, and sheet flooding in adversely impacting neighborhoods. So far, the committee has received over 800 responses to the flooding and drainage survey. A new non-profit organization called Renew Houston is interested in this particular issue and is willing to raise funds for a public awareness drive and possibly a referendum on the creation of an enterprise fund for street and drainage construction. An enterprise fund is similar to a storm water drainage tax. The new initiative will look to recruit members of the general public. T. Dornbusch asks: Will the committee be looking at how to address problem in older neighborhoods as they redevelop and continue to get more dense? CM Costello responds: Yes. In the Brown Administration there wasn't a study of where the problem exists. The city is currently sponsoring a needs assessment to prioritize the needs which is being conducted by Klotz and Associates. And the city's PW&E Dept. is conducting a street assessment using a vehicle that rates the traveling of the road and a series of cameras that monitors the roads and the cracks etc. If established, the Enterprise Fund could and should be a "pay as you go" system. When bonds are issued, 34% of the funds will be used to fund interest expense. The magnitude of problem is demonstrated by these facts: If your street is in bad shape, you and your neighbors complete a petition for street reconstruction, and the city's PW&E department agrees, it takes 12 years for your street to be reconstructed. Under the local drainage improvement program, small projects that cost less than \$150K, to which the city agrees, take seven years to complete.

B. HPD Community Liaison, Carol Trautwein: March on Crime Program

Officer Trautwein passed out brochures for redistribution to area civic clubs on how to prevent various types of crime. HPD wants to work more closely with the community to reduce crime. There will be an open house at the Central PIP meeting later this month.

C. Karen Derr: Homeless Animal Partnership Initiative (HAPI)

Karen Derr is a volunteer with HAPI founded by Lance Marshal to address animal welfare. Part of the mission is to help rescue groups find homes for animals at BARC before they're euthanised. It is also a goal of the organization to promote spay and neutering of homeless animals. The organization strives to educate the COH through neighborhood organizations regarding the importance of spaying and neutering pets because they are then less likely to roam, bite, and engage in aggressive behaviour. Things have gotten better with the new mayor and the new city council. But even

when run efficiently BARC will never be any better than a killing factory of homeless animals. 20-24K animals per year are euthanised there. They're asking neighborhood leaders to help educate their neighbors via newsletters and websites that there are low cost spay and neuter alternatives, eg SNAP, and that use of these options will help make Houston a more humane city. BARC spends \$5.7M per year to collect, house, and euthanise animals. That money could be spent better elsewhere. Its illegal to dump animals and to sell them out of houses and have dogs off leashes unless they're in a yard or a dog park where they cannot access a street. More information is available at www.HAPIforpets.org. CM Oliver Pennington responded that BARC is beginning a similar initiative to extol the benefits of spaying and neutering pets.

D. Jeanette Chinelli: Arts District Initiative

Ms. Chinelli presented a plan being formed by a steering committee of local arts organizations to apply to the Texas Commission on the Arts to create a cultural arts district in the eastern part of SN 22 between IH-45 and Heights Boulevard. The art-related organizations that have agreed to participate in and support this effort include Spacetaker, Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA), Winter Street Studios (80 art studios), Art on Washington Gallery, and the First Ward Civic Council. There are also many other non-profit and art-related entities located in the area that can reasonably be expected to participate in this effort should it move forward, including, e.g., the Old Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association and Avenue Community Development Corporation. The effort to seek cultural arts district designation is being launched for many reasons, including (1) to provide a cultural identity in which area residents, businesses owners, and developers will take pride; (2) to promote economic development by providing an identifiable area not only for displaying and marketing art, but also for building housing and studios for local artists; (3) to attract tourism by providing a destination that offers not only arts activities for residents and visitors, but also opportunities to explore Houston's history in the Old Sixth Ward Protected Historic District, and shop, dine, and entertain; (4) to encourage revitalization of vacant, blighted and/or underused area properties by providing an incentive for new and relocating businesses; (5) to stabilize and enhance area property values; and (6) to connect the arts more intimately with community development by providing an identifiable link between the downtown Theater District, the Old Sixth Ward Historic District, and the restaurants, nightclubs, and other entertainment venues developing along Washington Avenue.

J. Martinez and P. McIlvain announced that the unveiling of street sign toppers identifying the First Ward Arts District will take place on Saturday, March 27th at 10:00 a.m. on the corner of Houston Avenue and Crockett Street outside Dharma Café. Mayor Parker has agreed to perform the ceremonial unveiling of the street sign toppers. All community members are welcome to participate!

III. Old Business:

A. Committee Reports (15 minutes)

(1) TxDOT Drainage Ponds (T. Dornbusch, M. Perry, J. Martinez, M. Barre)

T. Dornbusch reports that the TxDOT detention pond project along frontage roads of IH-10 is intended to stop White Oak Bayou from flooding the main lanes of IH-10 between the Loop 610 and IH-45. The committee urges SN 22 to take steps to ensure that the ponds are more than just pits with fences.

Mary Jane Buschlen spoke about the MKT detention channel on the site of the Eureka Rail Yard west of the TC Jester over pass. This project is related to the expansion of Washington Avenue north of IH 10. It's a mile long road expansion and a 1.5 mile long detention channel project. She explained that TxDOT did not get funding from the Stimulus I package for that road reconstruction. This project was a contingency project for stimulus funding and when the Grand Parkway didn't get funded these projects rose up in priority.

(2) W/Ave Task Force: (J. West, P. Nicosia, T. Dornbusch, R. Taylor, P. Thomason) Report from Tanya Makany, CM Gonzalez' Chief of Staff: Ms. Makany reported that the first task force meeting was held 2-3 weeks ago and there it was decided to create four subcommittees with six-seven people one each working on action items. M. Poissant asked: Are those meetings subject to the opening meetings act? Tanya responded: No. M. Poissant asked: Are decisions going to be made at those meetings? Tanya responded: No, just proposals. M. Poissant asked: Will the proposals be presented to the neighborhoods? Tanya responded: Yes. B. Mize asked if he could attend the parking subcommittee meetings. Tanya responded: CM Lovell will be holding separate meetings about the parking.

This Thursday there will be transportation and infrastructure committee meeting at city council and that meeting will be open to the public.

(3) Bikeway Plans (F. Herrera, S. Johnson, T. Dornbusch) S. Johnson and T. Dornbusch reported that the effort to have the MKT ROW through the Eureka Yard included on the city's bikeway master plan is related to the bikeway plan because the city purchased this ROW for this use a few years ago. The ROW used to be used for a train to Galveston. The MKT ROW is the ROW through which the city has built the bike trail through the Heights, and the extension through the Eureka Yard is a natural western continuation of the already existing MKT hike and bike trail. The part that we're talking about is west of Shepard and the COH bought it in 2007 for expansion of hike and bike facilities but TxDOT has now determined that it wants to put the detention channel through there that will be 60 ft wide, ten feet deep, open, and fenced off; leaving only a narrow (10 ft wide) maintenance berm on one side and only 30 ft for the hike and bike trail. TxDOT's current plan deprives the city of a nice piece of property and one that is needed to connect the MKT hike and bike trail to Memorial Park and the NW transit center. The committee urges the SN to ask the city to maintain as much ROW as possible for public use. If the roadway expansion is necessary the channel is necessary.

(4) Capacity Building (J. West, P. Thomason, F. Herrera) No report.

B. W/Ave Residential Parking Permit Initiative (5 minutes) No news.

C. SNAP/CIP Request Update (J. West, 5 minutes)

1. SNAP Requests: Overlay of Shepherd Drive from Memorial to I-10, Overlay of Sawyer Street from Washington to I-10, Overlay of Patterson Street from Washington to I-10, Overlay of Center Street from Shepherd to Bonner, Intersection Redesign of Washington at Sawyer, Intersection Redesign of Waugh at Feagan, Intersection Redesign of Washington at Studemont, Intersection Redesign of Shepherd at Memorial. Tracking is expected to start on April 1st. CIP requests are now being made via 311 service. To be considered for this year's process March 15th is the cut off date for consideration. April 1 is also census day. They're coming now. Anyone as a permanent resident in your home on April 1st.

2. CIP Requests: District G hearing March 3rd; District H hearing, March 10th, 6-10 p.m.

D. Area Business Owners Committee (L. Barrash, 5 minutes) Next meeting: March 16, 3:00-4:30, Raia's

L. Barrash reported that the Wave jitney has secured a second parking lot on TC Jester on either side of a big building between Schuler and Allen Streets. Parking there will initially be free as in Lot H. Business owners are supporting the Wave in any way they can to help support the Wave and encourage people to park elsewhere. There will be monthly memberships because they have frequent riders. The Wave jitneys are now serving as information booths. Ms. Barrash reported that she is in the process of purchasing her third vehicle. They're making some changes to the ordinance to make it more current, and the Wave jitney may be have the opportunity to begin function as a circulator for midtown and downtown as well as Washington Ave.

E. Transportation Committee (S. Johnson and T. Dornbusch, 15 minutes)

S. Johnson reported that the transportation committee has been thinking about all modes of transportation over the last few months, and how best to handle the need for expanding all modes of transportation through our area. All the rail ideas are still in discussion and the committee has not yet adopted a consensus plan. Once a consensus plan is reached, the idea is to take the plan in the form of a power point presentation out to all of SN's constituent organizations for the purpose of gaining resolutions of support. One aspect around which consensus has been reached is a proposal to reinstall a streetcar on Washington Avenue.

IV. Announcements, Community Reports, and Open Comments (5 minutes)

CM Ed Gonzalez' Chief of Staff, Tanya Makany, made the following announcements:

The District H CIP meeting will be held at Jeff Davis High School on Wednesday, March 10th from 6-8 PM. The focus there will be on large construction projects. If there are any constituent issues staff will be on hand to address them. She doesn't know if projects will happen but requests can be made.

Saturday, March 20th, CM Gonzalez will host a Green Your Yard event. April 5th is the date that the city will stop picking up yard waste unless it is contained in compostable bags.

Tuesday, March 9th, 7:00 p.m.: Citywide Positive Interaction Program (PIP) meeting, at HPOU building, 1600 State Street. A presentation will be given on the red light cameras around Houston.

Wednesday, March 10th, 6:00-8:00 p.m.: District H CIP Hearing, Jefferson Davis High School, 1101 Quitman St., 77009. **This is the public's chance to suggest capitol improvement projects.**

Tuesday, March 16th, 6:30 p.m.: Joint Meeting of SN 22 and Greater Heights Super Neighborhood (SN 15) to hear representatives from the Houston-Galveston Area Council present their study to identify and prioritize future transit needs in our region for incorporation into the Regional Transportation Plan through the year 2040. The meeting will be held at in the Heights Fire Station and City Hall, located at 107 W 12th St at the corner of W 12th and Yale. You are all invited to attend this joint meeting to hear about their study, discuss the purpose and need, and to provide comments to the HGAC and the study team. The HGAC has set up a website which also provides a brief overview of the study which can be see here: http://www.h-gac.com/taq/transit_planning/framework_study/default.aspx. Please encourage all who are interested in transit and transportation in our area and the surrounding areas to come and participate.

Saturday, March 20th, 9:00-11:00 a.m.: Green Your Yard Event: District H CM Ed Gonzalez invites you to attend this event on at Proctor Plaza Park, 803 W. Temple Street, 77009, to learn new recycling habits and more about compostable bags, grass recycling, and composting.

Wednesday, March 24th, 7:00 p.m.: Central Positive Interaction Program meeting, HPOU building, 1600 State St.

Thursday, March 25th, 7:00 p.m.: Public Meeting of City of Houston Term Limits Review Commission, City Council Chamber, City Hall. **PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE RECEIVED.**

Monday, April 12, 2010, 6:30 p.m.: Next SN 22 Meeting, County Attorney Vince Ryan will address the meeting.

V. Adjournment: 8:30 p.m.