**SOUTHWESTERN HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

**General Meeting (Candidate Forum)**

**February 26, 2024**

The Forum hosted at Brody Middle School was called to order at 6:30pm with eighty neighbors in attendance. Board members attending were George Davis, Jon Shelness, Joe Harrison, Steve Utterson, Nick VanPatten and Pete Conrad. Special guests were recognized including Janice Steele (DM Parks), Joe Gatto (Council), Linda Westergard (Council) Carl Voss (Council). Former Mayor Frank Cownie was recognized and is a neighborhood member. Local News coverage was present.

At-Large candidates present were Robert Pate, Mike Simonson, Rosemarie Smith, Ben Clarke, Claudia Addy and Justyn Lewis. Candidates were given two minutes to respond to questions. The election is March 19th.

Why are you running and what are your concerns? What are your concerns about DART transportation, their budget requests, trash pickup at stops, reduced routes and is it a user-friendly system? City Budgets with increased dollar requests are coming from several departments including, police, parks, and administration, what are your thoughts? What are your ideas regarding vacant businesses in our city. Are zoning requirements to demanding for startup businesses? All questions were audience generated and included area of environmental concerns, homelessness, street money beggars and city obligations to residents. Many questions were referenced back to DART.

Candidates answered each question with some admitting they would have to do research in that specific area. It is not the Southwestern Hills Neighborhood Associations intent to endorse or favor any candidates’ answers. The Forum gave each candidate time to respond and give their views. Each candidate stated they were happy with the format.

The Forum adjourned at 8:20pm with most candidates talking with individual attendees for a short time.

The meeting concluded at 8:20pm. With doors shut at 8:50pm.

Minutes recorded by George Davis for Board Secretary Ginny Renda.

.

.