

Neartown Association Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2017 – 7:00 PM

Cherryhurst Park Community Center, 1700 Missouri St

1). Introductions

2). Montrose TIRZ Update – Randy Mitchmore, Chairman of the Montrose TIRZ Board and Joe Webb, Montrose TIRZ Board Member

Randy discussed the TIRZ Board's activities this year, which have been primarily training and getting organized. Three committees have been set up: projects, community engagement, and finance. The TIRZ should see its first funds this summer, but we will probably not see any significant project results for a couple of years. Expect to do due diligence and community engagement.

Joe pointed out that all of the elements in the initial proposal are still in the TIRZ plan and the territory encompassed in the TIRZ boundaries is substantially the same (a small section was de-annexed and 2 small sections were added by the city). As to what projects will be tackled first, that has not yet been determined. The initial deposit to the bank will be ~\$1.5M and the TIRZ will be in a position to borrow additional funds from the bank. Joe pointed out that there are opportunities for the TIRZ to participate in the city projects on Lower Westheimer and W. Alabama; they could also identify projects (e.g., sidewalk improvements) to begin addressing incrementally, year by year.

The TIRZ Board meetings are held 3rd Mondays of each month, at 6:00 PM, at St. Stephen's Pecore Hall on Sul Ross at Woodhead. All are welcome. There is time for public comments at the end of every meeting.

3). Montrose Management District Update on Esplanade Project – Don Huml

Don reported that the committee overseeing the esplanade improvements decided to step back and look at the implications of related things that the city is doing before proceeding with the next phase of the project, planned for Montrose between W. Gray and W. Dallas. For this purpose, they have contracted Walter P. Moore and a landscape architect. They still plan to provide a forum to gather public input on this project.

4). Lower Westheimer Corridor Study - Mathew Seubert, City of Houston Planning Department

Matt briefly reviewed the work completed to date on the Lower Westheimer Corridor pre-engineering study. The study area includes two segments of Westheimer/Elgin: Montrose to Main S, which is in the CIP and will go to design this summer, and Shepherd to Montrose, which is not yet funded. Project concepts for the corridor were presented at a community meeting on April 20.

The materials presented at the April meeting, along with a comment form, are available at www.lowerwestheimerstudy.org. The city is accepting comments through May 31. Everyone is encouraged to give input.

5). Blue Line Transit Discussion – Kay Warhol

Following up on the discussion from the March meeting, Kay reported that the METRO Board is not moving as quickly as first thought on conducting public outreach on the long range plan. We should target June to agree on Neartown's position on support for building high capacity transit (either light rail or bus rapid transit) on Richmond Ave. All CAs are asked to discuss with their members in the interim. Kay provided a handout summarizing previous statements of support from Neartown for the Richmond Ave. alignment of the University Line.

6). Other

- Neartown support of Houston Complete Streets Coalition – Neartown is a member of the Houston Complete Streets Coalition. Kay is Neartown's representative to the group and will attend the May 2nd annual progress report from the City.
- Walkable Places Committee – Greg reported on the latest discussions of this City Planning Commission subcommittee
- Super Neighborhood Alliance update – Kay reported briefly on the discussion on the City's homeless initiative and related new ordinances. The Mayor is asking the Super Neighborhoods to work with their City Council Member to identify appropriate locations in their area where temporary shelter, feeding, and services could be provided to the homeless.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25.