

Nearatown Association Minutes

June 25, 2019

Cherryhurst Park Community Center, 1700 Missouri St.

President Greg LeGrande called the meeting to order at 7:05.

1. Introductions- 20 in attendance; of which 1 was a candidate City Council, Position 5, Sally Alcon. She spoke briefly about her candidacy.
2. Greg Marshall, Rice Director of University Relations presented information on the ongoing progress of the Rice Ion Project.

Rice had leased out the land Sears was built on for 99 years in 1938. They bought out the lease 20 years early to establish and create an innovative district on the sight now held by the Sears building and surroundings acreage. The Ion Project represents the first phase in the development of Rice's broader innovation district, which will be developed on 16 acres in Midtown and is set to include commercial development, housing and public spaces. Through academic and corporate partners, the redesigned former Sears building will host educational events, demonstrations, hack-a-thons and programming events. Restaurant and entertainment venues will be added, as well.

More details of this project and updates can be found at <https://ionhouston.com>

3. Ava Thibodeau gave a presentation on Coalition for the Homeless.

There is an ongoing discussion of the statistics gathered on the homeless in urban cities in order to best determine what efforts are working best for the dollars invested. It is necessary to gather good data on the unsheltered homeless to assist in understanding causes, and effective responses. Unsheltered homeless are those who do not use shelters provided but reside on the street, abandoned buildings, or other places not meant for human habitation. As we know many shelters have strict regulations and rules for those staying there. The coalition is looking at studies that show what might be working in addressing this population. The state of Texas is allotting \$1.8 million to Houston for use with homeless projects. Houston has no specific revenue designated to the homeless cause.

Teams are going out for 3 days in attempts to count where homeless have slept the past few nights in order to establish trends and cut back on gathering locations. 20% of the homeless were due to Harvey after the hurricane. Now, 1 in 9 homeless is due to Harvey. As we know many organizations are on the streets daily in attempts to work with the homeless. The amount of organizations doing this work has not increased from 2016 to 2019. There is a 2-year pilot program to create more low barrier shelters, shelters with little rules and restrictions, in hopes to provide more shelter opportunities to those refusing shelters now.

More info can be found at <http://www.homelesshouston.org>

4. Steve Longmire gave a brief project update on the I-45 North Houston Highway Improvement Project. He encouraged all to check with the website frequently to get info and updates, and to see times and places for meetings. www.ih45northandmore.com

Information is that the Montrose bridges will not come down. Work should start on I-69 under those bridges in summer of 2021.

Greg LeGrande gave a report on the Walkable Places Committee.

Montrose TIRZ meeting update from June 17 meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Recorded by Joellen Brayshaw