

Nearatown Association Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2019 – 7:00 PM

Cherryhurst Park Community Center, 1700 Missouri St

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

1. Introductions— 8 people were in attendance. Lanny Bose introduced himself as a candidate for Texas House District 134.
2. Houston Police Department Plans for closing the Westheimer Storefront and recent violent issues. Greg discussed the plan for HPD to close the Montrose storefront station when the property is redeveloped. There was a brief discussion of the planned redevelopment, which was the subject of a community meeting hosted by CM Ellen Cohen on Sep 26. The new development also involves the relocation of the Montrose Freed library (related article: <https://communityimpact.com/houston/heights-river-oaks-montrose/city-county/2019/09/30/montrose-collective-library/>).

Greg has spoken to HPD Chief Acevedo several times, expressing concern about the loss of police presence and established relationships with the neighborhood when the storefront is closed. Sylvia Drew has raised the prospect of maintaining a local office where officers could stop in and file reports, etc. and still maintain a presence without staffing the office full time. However, Chief Acevedo has indicated that he doesn't believe that the storefront is an efficient use of resources. We discussed the possibility of a letter from Nearatown to the Chief, with a copy to the Mayor.

3. MetroNext Bond Election – Discussion and vote on Nearatown Support. Given the lack of a quorum at the meeting, this item was deferred.
Special guest Ashley Johnson of LINK Houston provided background on the organization, a nonprofit that advocates for a robust and equitable transportation network. He spoke about LINK's analysis of transportation needs (see the [Equity in Transit Report](#)) and how the METRONext plan addresses them (link to analysis: <https://linkhouston.org/news/link-houston-on-metronext/>). In addition to educating communities on the METRONext plan, LINK Houston is currently focused on:
 - Monitoring of Mayor Turner's Safer Streets initiative and attention to [LINK Houston's Most Dangerous Intersections study](#);
 - Continued partnership with communities to support equitable protection of communities, homes, historic sites, and mobility options impacted by the [planned I-45 expansion project](#)The organization has recently hired a team of Community Engagement Specialists to broaden its relationships with key communities. Ali Schoon, who lives in Montrose, will be engaging with Nearatown.
4. Nearatown Officers 2020 – Greg noted that we will soon be electing officers for next year.

5. Other—

- Montrose TIRZ 27 Board Meeting—Update from October 21, 2019 Board Meeting. Greg reported that two new Board members were sworn in – Ray Valdez and Jovon Tyler. The creation of the Montrose Redevelopment Authority has been approved by City Council. Gauge Engineering is mapping traffic, flooding, and pedestrian safety hot spots for the TIRZ. The planned Livable Centers Study should kick off in 2020.
- Super Neighborhood Alliance Meeting – Update October 14, 2019 Meeting. Kay Warhol reported that the SNA heard from DA Kim Ogg on the Marijuana Misdemeanor Diversion Program and bail reform. METRO Board Chair Carrin Patman also spoke about the METRONext plan.
- There was a brief discussion about the Candidate Forum. It was felt that the session was well run, but the number of candidates meant that it was hard to get good answers from them.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10.

Submitted by Kay Warhol