

## **January 8, 1998**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. Gary Coover presided. In attendance were Gary Coover, Bonnie Goodrich-Coover, Laura and Rob Devinney, Valerie Peiser, Patti Thompson, Clay Sterling, Tony Herrada, Peter Boyle, Lewis LeMaster, John and Daisy Pearce, Maaike Van Bommel, and Ann Lugg.

The minutes from the November meeting were read and approved. John and Daisy Pearce, new to the neighborhood, were welcomed.

### **Old Business**

#### **Treasurer's report**

The association has \$268.77 in the checking account and \$5009.21 in the savings account. Proceeds from the garage sale amounted to \$1037.16 (not included in the \$5009.21). There is \$805.43 in the beautification project savings account.

#### **Historical Committee report**

The application for the National Register of Historical Neighborhoods is not yet completed, but Gary said it won't be long. He brought along a list of the houses that have been designated "contributing" and those that are not quite contributing (and why they aren't).

#### **Esplanade Beautification Program**

John (?) said that work needs to begin on clearing the ground for planting. Patti suggested that everyone interested in helping meet the following Saturday at 9 a.m. There was some discussion of whether to plant rye grass to prevent soil erosion.

#### **Deed Restrictions**

Laura reported that 802 W. Alabama has put up two signs (only one is allowed by deed restrictions), and that at 805-809 Marshall more units are being put in, also against the restrictions. She is keeping an eye on the developments at that address. The developer building on the corner of Audubon and Hawthorne has a plot plan to submit to the deed restriction committee, which is monitoring the situation.

#### **Neighborhood Group Meetings**

The February monthly meeting will be Tuesday, February 17 at HSPVA with First Montrose Commons, Roseland Estates, and APA. These groups want to hold joint meetings very third or fourth month.

Westmoreland has requested that everyone call in any incidents so that police will send more patrols to the area. James Soboda wants all non-emergency events to be reported to him at the storefront number, 529-3100.

Sam reported, through a note, that our relationship with Westmoreland is deteriorating. Westmoreland asked when and where we meet so they can send a representative to our meetings. Sam expressed reluctance to have a Westmoreland person attending our meetings because of some of the business we discuss. There was considerable discussion,

and it was finally decided that our meetings are open, and anyone who wants to attend can do so.

### **New Business Neighborhood Traffic Proposal**

Clay reported that the city has basically told us they don't want to hear from us again. A compromise agreed upon between Courtland Place and Westmoreland suggests that Hawthorne be closed to eastbound traffic. Sam suggested (through a note) that we not oppose the compromise as a group to keep our relationship with Westoreland as good as possible. Laura objected to this approach and said that the present configuration makes sense. Laura made a motion that Audubon Place Association should oppose the compromise as a group. Patti seconded.

Clay said that the city is trying to move the compromise through, and Laura suggested that we do what we can to keep the city to its word. Her motion to oppose the compromise was voted on and unanimously approved.

### **Solicitation of Area Businesses for Newsletter Ads**

Gary said we should go for ads from businesses in our neighborhood before asking outside the neighborhood. If anyone knows of a business that might want to buy an ad, they should let Sam know.

### **Honoring John linger**

Maaike made a motion that we honor John Unger for his contribution to the neighborhood newsletter (he funds its printing and mailing each month). Patti seconded the motion. Valerie suggested that we give him an American Express gift certificate rather than a gift certificate for a specific restaurant (amount: \$100). The motion was voted on and unanimously supported.

### **Historical Neighborhood Council**

Gary reported that the council is having a workshop on how to research historical neighborhoods, 9:30-noon January 24th in the old library building downtown. The purpose of the workshop is to show people where to find information, and what kind of resources they have at the library.

In conjunction with Fotofest the Historic Neighborhoods Council is having a photo contest, subject: neighborhoods. There is \$500 in prizes and a special category for children under 12.

Laura reported that the Historical Montrose Association asked that additional plaques be added to our signs to say "Historic Montorse Association: Deed restrictions enforced." The cost of the plaques will be \$480. Patti moved that APA donate the money for the plaques. Laura seconded the motion and the vote to support it was unanimous.

Clay Sterling made a motion that the meeting adjourn. Tony Herrada seconded. The time was 8:40 p.m.



Re 803 Hawthorne: Valerie expressed concern that there is not enough parking there.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

a) Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Organizations; new organization by the name of Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Houston, 803 Hawthorne, Stuart Zuckerbread, 807-0675.

Activities:

- (1) Information center for activists
- (2) House several Groups
- (3) Meeting Space

b) Dues are Due:

APA \$10/person

Neartown \$25/annum

Houston Homeowners Association \$50, Valerie is representative

c) Other New Business

David Boozer reports street situation on Montrose is bad.

Sewer improvements appear to be fairly soon. Sewers will be torn up. How will this affect the Esplanade project.

Griffs parking problems. Return after the PIP report is requested for the newsletter. Put in Newsletter a monthly reminder of when the heavy trash pick ups are.

Valerie will reprint some note on the heavy trash ordinance in the April newsletter.

V. ADJOURN

**April 2, 1998**

Sam Bernstein called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. In attendance were Valerie Peiser, Maaike Van Bommel, Patti Thompson, Gary Coover, Karen Bernstein, Joseph & Janet McGaha, Clay Sterling, Greg Kaufman, Rob & Laura Devinney, Stewart Zuckerbrod, and AnnLugg.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Maaike reported that there is currently \$180.77 in the association checking account, \$ in the esplanade account, and \$ in the savings account. Clay made a motion that the proceeds from the garage sale should be transferred to the savings account rather than the esplanade account. Karen seconded, and all voted in favor of the motion.

### **Old Business**

#### **Historical Committee Report**

Gary reported that he thinks the neighborhood should go for city historical designation. The application for the national designation is all done, (except for a little info Gary needs to provide yet) and having city designation would possibly help to curb the drastic changes that are taking place in the area (homeowners are required to file notice to make changes to historic structures, then wait 90 days before beginning work). He said that 67% of more than half the property owners must support the historical designation application in order for it to take effect.

Gary suggested that we start a petition drive. Interested people should meet at Gary's at 3pm on Sunday to talk about what needs to be done.

#### **Esplanade Beautification Committee**

Sam has ordered 31 15-gallon crepe myrtles to be delivered to his house. Wholesale purchase is saving us quite a lot of money. The remaining money will go to start a plumbing project for watering the plants.

Valerie suggested that the association purchase a large amount of mulch and sell it to local residents to make some money. She also suggested that memorial plaques be placed by trees, which led to some discussion. In the end, it was decided that Valerie should find out how much such plaques would cost.

#### **Deed Restrictions**

Laura reported that the committee has asked the city for help on signage, dumpsters, and occupancy levels in the neighborhood, but got no satisfactory response. She has made a personal appeal to Anise Parker for help.

The development on the corner of Audubon and Hawthorne has been approved. Three town houses will be constructed on the lot, one facing Audubon, two facing Hawthorne. There will be a 15 foot setback on Hawthorne and a 20 foot setback on Audubon, which, along with the capitulation by the developer, who had wanted to build four units on the lot, is a great victory for the deed restriction committee.

#### **Security Committee**

This group has not met yet. Tony Herrada will call everyone on the committee to notify them of the next meeting.

#### **Traffic Project on Hawthorne**

A recent meeting with the city was attended by several AP residents. The city reported that the barriers they have put up are quite effective in cutting down afternoon peak traffic. Westmoreland is very upset, however, because this configuration has increased eastbound traffic throughout the day by 23%. Nevertheless, the present configuration will most likely be recommended as the plan to implement.

Clay commented that the city did not tell his committee what the last plan would be before they put it in place. He doesn't feel that the city has been honest with us on the traffic plan. It was generally agreed that the present setup is better than no setup at all, though.

### **New Business**

#### **Annual dues**

It's time to pay dues. \$10 per person per year. Several people ponied up.

#### **Two houses on Hawthorne**

It is suspected that the houses at 633 and 637 will be demolished for new construction. There was general consternation over this development, and much discussion about what can be done to stop the tearing down of fully habitable houses in favor of new construction. It was agreed, as Laura suggested, that people in the neighborhood need to be educated about the present value of their houses and the hot market for older houses in our neighborhood. Valerie suggested that we make a brochure to educate people about the present real estate market in our area. Patty made a motion to create such a brochure and Laura seconded. Laura and Valerie agreed to make the brochure.

Laura asked Sam to write a letter to the purchasers, sellers, and brokers of the two houses on Hawthorne and explain to them that this is an historical neighborhood and these structures contribute to that historical nature. She asked him to say, too, that if they're working with builders, there are better properties in the neighborhood than these to raze.

Laura suggested that the neighborhood protest the demolition of these houses. She said we should give a historical tour of the neighborhood, including these houses, and invite the press. There wasn't anything decided on this suggestion, and we moved on to other new business.

#### **Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center**

Stewart Zuckerbrod, director of the new Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center to be located at 803 Hawthorne, made a presentation to those assembled. He opened by saying that he was glad they would be having neighbors like us and encouraged us to meet in their center in the future. The Center will function as a meeting place for a large number of gay and lesbian groups in the city. It will house a switchboard, mailboxes, and a meeting place for organizations. They are setting up a volunteer organization to keep the place up. The Houston Garden and Yard Society has volunteered to landscape the lot.

There was considerable discussion about the additional traffic and parking problems the Center would bring to the neighborhood. Stewart reassured us that they would do everything they could to minimize the impact on local residents. He said they want to be a part of the neighborhood, not a blight on it.

#### **Griffs/City of Houston Committee**

It has been suggested that a committee be formed to interact with Griffs and the city to deal with problems arising out of Griffs special events. Some residents of Roseland have approached the association to get such an effort going. Sam suggested that we open lines of communication with Griffs. Laura made a motion that a committee be formed of Griffs

neighbors and Audubon Place residents to work with Griffs to minimize its impact during future events. Karen seconded, and everyone voted in support of the motion. Laura volunteered to head the committee. Sam will attend the first meeting and talk to the Roseland residents about coming back into the AP "fold" to work on this problem.

Patty made a motion that the meeting be adjourned and Gary seconded. The time was 9:05p.m.

May 7, 1998

Sam Bernstein called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. In attendance were Valerie Peiser, Gary Coover, Bonnie Goodrich, Clay Sterling, Laura Devinney, John O'Donnell, Tony Herrada, Peter Boyle, Lewis LeMaster, and Ann Lugg.

### **Treasurer's Report**

There was no treasurer's report. Sam did report, however, that we have spent \$1,610 on crepe myrtles for the esplanade. This money came out of the esplanade fund.

### **Old Business**

#### **Security**

The committee hasn't met yet. Sam is working on setting up a meeting.

#### **Esplanade Committee**

The crepe myrtles have been purchased, and are being watered by residents. There were plans to plant azaleas, but the lack of ready water caused the committee to decide on purple sage instead. There has been a problem, however, in finding the sage in quantity. Valerie says there is water on the esplanade, so it might work to plant azaleas. There was considerable discussion about how the water that's on the esplanade can be hooked up so we can have easy access to it. In the end, it was decided that what we should do should not be recorded in these minutes.

John O'Donnell said that the city has changed its way of giving out beautification funds, so we need to think of another project to get more funding from the city. He said that the city has increased the funds available and lowered the percentage that has to be matched from one half to one third.

#### **Historical Committee Report**

Bonnie reported that most of the forms are filled out for the city historic designation. She said that Karen has made slides of most of the houses in the neighborhood. Gary has gathered a list of names of all the homeowners in the neighborhood. Signatures will be gathered in several different steps: First, there will be the May 13 party on the esplanade. Then, door-to-door canvassing of those who seem to be favorably disposed to signing. Then approach those who haven't signed yet. Perhaps have a formal, educational event to inform them of what city historical designation means.

Flyers have been distributed for the petition signing party on May 13 (Peter Boyle designed the flyer). Bonnie is organizing the party. She went over what is needed to make the party possible (and a success!). Valerie made a motion to allow Bonnie to spend \$250.00 to buy food and drinks for the party. She will be approaching area businesses first to see if they will donate goods. Laura seconded the motion, and the vote to approve was unanimous.

### **Deed Restrictions**

There wasn't much for the committee to report. Laura said that she has consulted with attorneys about the dumpster on ? and Tammy Manning's law office sign on Stanford and Alabama. The said it was a matter of who has the deepest pockets. There has been no further activity. The committee is working on strategies for dealing with the present two violations.

### **Griffs Committee**

An informal committee has been formed. On it are Jerry Sebesta, Laura, Jack Rose, Sam, and Laura Bodenheimer. The met with Griffs, who agreed to tell the association about any special events they may be having.

### **New Business June or July Meeting**

After some discussion, it was decided that a joint meeting with First Montrose Commons and Roseland Estates would be best if held in June, as the July meeting will be very close to the July 4th holiday. Sam will talk with them and see if they are interested. The next meeting date and place will be published in the newsletter.

### **Westheimer Street Festival**

There was a call for comments on the festival:

John commented that there are trash cans that still haven't been picked up, although the festival was more than a week ago. He called the city and talked to several people trying to find out with whom to file a complaint. Finally, he spoke to Wayne Whitehead, who listened to John's story with interest. Wayne said he'd work on it. That was a couple of days ago. John hasn't heard from Wayne yet.

There was considerable discussion on who to call about the trash pickup. Laura will call Solid Waste tomorrow. Sam said that John should write a letter. Laura suggested that he take a picture of the trash cans and mail it with the letter to the city.

Several people witnessed hordes of people walking into and out of the festival with coolers of beer and six packs, an activity that is supposedly forbidden. Nobody seemed to care.

Valerie said that all of the cars parked on Audubon were egged on the Saturday night of the festival. It is difficult to say if this was festival related.

Clay reported very loud music being played in the garage of the bungalow on Taft. Many neighbors gathered to complain, but the band had a permit. Clay commented that as the band drank more, they sounded more horrible.

Laura said that all of these activities need to be documented and reported to the city.

### **Other New Business**

Valerie has called the cops about sex on the streets in the neighborhood. Officer Soboda and his people will be keeping particular watch out for the next two weeks. John commented that effective lighting discourages this kind of activity.

Clay suggested that we let the Plant Man on Westheimer near Montrose bid on the remaining plants for the esplanade. Everyone agreed that was a good idea.

Lewis made a motion that the meeting be adjourned and Bonnie seconded. The vote was unanimous. It was 9:10 p.m.

Patty made a motion that the meeting be adjourned and Gary seconded. The time was 9:05p.m.

**September 3, 1998 (reconstructed)**

**Attendees**

In attendance were Bonnie Goodrich, Andrea di Bagno, Alex di Bagno, Chuck Noll, Valerie Peiser, Maaike van Bommel, Patti Thompson, Philip Paratore, Linda & Bob Vaden-Good, John C. O'Donnell, Sam Bernstein, and Ann Lugg.

**Treasurer's Report**

Checking account balance per 8/21/08	\$ 362.82
Disbursed \$25.00 to Neartown	
Savings account balance per 8/12/98	4,413.36
Interest paid 7/11-8/12 \$ 7.89	
Esplanade account balance per 8/25/98	324.31
Richard Holly donation for mulch	50.00
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	\$5,150.49

### **Festivals in the Area**

The Greek Festival is underway, and the Westheimer Street Festival is coming up soon. Everyone was urged to document any negative things related to the Westheimer fest. Rob made the point that perhaps the new mayor would be more receptive to complaints. Laura said that the festival ordinance needs to be revised in order to stop the festival. John suggested we pressure the proper city department to impose half-street parking, and Laura suggested everyone put their future efforts into the revision of the ordinance.

### **Neighborhood Garage Sale**

The date has been set for November 12, the place is Valerie's house.

### **New Business**

#### **Get to Know Your Firestation**

Gary announced that at 6pm on Wednesday, October 7, fire sirens will go off as part of the Fire Department's efforts to get people to visit their fire stations.

#### **Alley Ordinance**

There was some discussion about the city's move to rework the alley ordinance. The city is taking input now and they don't have a clue as to what will be done. Gary went to a meeting where this was discussed. Heights residents do not want to have a "superhighway" behind their houses, which is what the developers want to put in. Anyone with strong feelings on alleys should contact Ray Driskoll.

#### **Westheimer Street Festival, Revisited**

Laura got a packet from Neartown and Avondale task force on the Westheimer Street Festival. It contained copies of many letters that have gone between the two groups and the city. One of the letters is to the TABC asking them to deny temporary alcoholic beverage sales permit for the festival, because the open container rule has not been working. Gary suggested that the association start raising a ruckus at the city council sound off session to keep pressure on against the festival. Laura stressed that efforts should be coordinated with Neartown and Avondale associations, as they have already put great efforts into having the festival stopped.

#### **Watering the Esplanade**

There was considerable discussion on watering the esplanade. Then Patti made a motion that Terri should look into the cost of putting a sprinkler system in the esplanade, as she is very keen on the idea. Sam seconded the motion, and it was approved by those in attendance.

### **Garbage Can Trouble**

Laura said that people are leaving garbage cans in the street. Philip Paratore said to call the city if anyone repeatedly does this, and they'll send a letter to them. Then the city will visit and talk to them. Laura suggested we should be vigilant about trash pickup, where cans are left, and for how long.

Gary then gave an excellent slide presentation about the historic structures in the neighborhood.

Patti made a motion that the meeting be adjourned and Sam seconded. The time was 9:35p.m.

## **October 1,1998**

Gary Coover called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. In attendance were Valerie Peiser, Terry Baird, Patti Thompson, John C. O'Donnell, Sam Bernstein, Tim Wilkins, Michael Landrum, Philip Paratore, Andrea d'Bagno, Rob & Laura Devinney, and Ann Lugg.

There was no review of minutes from the last meeting. The review will take place at the November meeting.

### **Treasurer's Report**

There was no financial report available.

### **Old Business Beautification**

Committee

Last weekend two volunteers showed up to plant ground cover and replace some dead plants. The plan is to finish planting next Sunday. Volunteers should report to Sam's house on Audubon at 9am.

### **Historical Committee Report**

Gary suggested that he put together a book of all the past historical articles he's written for the newsletter. Patti made a motion that he be reimbursed for the expense incurred in compiling such a book. Sam seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

### **Neighborhood Connections Conference**

The Audubon Place Association won a computer at the city's neighborhood conference. The computer is rather slow and came with no software at all. Patti suggested that we donate it to a neighborhood that needs it, and some of those present agreed. However, some thought that it should be sold at the garage sale and the money go into the association's coffers. There was considerable discussion about the pros and cons of both actions, but in the end it was decided that we sell the computer. John made the motion, Rob seconded, and the vote was carried by a majority.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

The slate of nominated officers was circulated. Voting will take place at the November meeting. The committee didn't nominate anyone for the second vice president position, and no names were put forth for the position by those at the meeting.

### **Gang Graffiti in the Neighborhood**

Graffiti is appearing around the neighborhood. Gary called the Graffiti Task Force and got the procedure for having it covered or removed. On private property you must remove the graffiti yourself. On public property, call the city and they'll take care of it.

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