

2-9-19 WPNA General Meeting Minutes
Memorial United Methodist Church
Austin, TX

I. Welcome: Dan opened the meeting at 10:15 am. He welcomed new residents and people who are visiting WPNA for the first time. Dan thanked sponsors and reminded residents to patronize those who support us. We also acknowledged newspaper deliverers.

II. Citizen's Communication:

- A. **Brian Graham:** Brian discussed a possible zoning change in the neighborhood. This change could affect single family home units. This has been co-sponsored by Greg Cesar and Natasha Harper-Madison. On 2/21 they will instruct the city staff to draft an ordinance. This resolution has been posted on the listserv. It will be on the upcoming council agenda.
- B. **Register to vote:** If you changed your address, name or if you haven't registered before, it's not too soon! You can become a voter registrar too. Look for trainings on the city website.
- C. **Saturday March 2:** It's My Park Day projects from 9-noon. Our neighborhood has a project at Bartholomew and Pomerleau Park. We need volunteers. The Pomerleau event (1906 Patton Lane) will end with a potluck. There will be an art project on site for knitters and crocheters. If you knit or crochet, let Elizabeth or Jeanette know. Cotton yarn is not the best, but wool or acrylic are. 2x4 inch squares are needed. Sign up at austinparks.org. T-shirts are available for all volunteers who sign up, snacks for all!
- D. **City Commission:** Now is a good time to sign up for the city commission. City clerk's website is where you can sign up. Around 60 commissions all over the city. Doesn't take a lot of time, but it gives a view as to what is going on around the city.
- E. **Anne from Indvisible 25 East:** If you'd like to get more active politically, please talk to Anne.
- F. **Dolly: Block Leader Training** for composting and recycling. Trainings are Saturday mornings and you can become a block leader for your street!
- G. **Emily Sawyer:** AISD FABPAC- represents District 2. Update for the facilities master plan for 2019, a survey is currently out for this update. Survey at [aisd fmp](#), link to [community survey](#). Online in English and Spanish. They are looking for places to place paper copies in the neighborhood. If you know of a good place, let Emily know.
- H. **MOD pizza fundraiser-** Come support the WPNA scholarship fund on 2/13 at MOD Pizza between the hours of 10:30 am-10:00 pm.

III. Yard of the Month: Sara Jane Lee

2002 Lazybrook Circle is the month's winner. They inherited most of their trees and shrubs. They added cacti and silvia greyguy. They have a winter garden currently and have gardens in the front for each season. Water barrel in the yard helps keep things watered. Winter rye pops and compliments their home. They advise adding as many edible plants as possible. The winners will receive a \$50 gift card from Shoal Creek Nursery. Shoal Creek is currently remodeling and will be finished with their project in March.

IV. Approval of minutes from January 2018: Edits- change caps and shirts are a “gift” rather than sales. Change Jackie Chandler to Jackie Brooks. Motion to approve minutes with corrections. Seconded and approved.

V. Treasurer’s Report: Everything has been entered into Quickbooks and when that was done, the scholarship funds were inaccurate. Treasurer’s report was listed on the back of the agenda with more details. Dan reminded people to pay their dues for 2019.

VI. Sheryl Cole: State Representative

Chair of Audit and Finance for City Council. On Ways and Means Committee currently. Tax cap bills, in which she is bitterly opposed to, is a project she is working on with the city and municipal league. The other committee she is appointed to is Redistricting (4 year appointment). No appointee to that committee in 150 years. Also appointed to the County Affairs Committee. She has filed several bills. She has co-authored a bill which would legalize marijuana statewide. She is the lead author on bill that would decriminalize marijuana. Co-authored a bill on global climate protection commission. Rosie’s Law: a law that would allow medicaid to be used for an abortion. It has been filed and there will be a big rally at the capital for this bill. There will be a press conference this week and when the date for the rally is decided, it will be posted everywhere and we’ll need your support.

Q: Do you have a website?

A: sherylcole.com You can use this to contact the office and get in touch with everyone and see the legislation she has filed. You can sign up to get her emails on this site too.

Q: Public schools are very important to our neighborhood. Opportunities at the state level to consider funding for our schools? How do we attract and keep highly qualified teachers?

A: #1 bill that Sheryl is working on says we should stop looking at districts, but start looking at schools separately. Makes no sense to send our tax \$s outside of the district who are equally as worst off as ours.

Q: Tax idea for fixing tax gas: Texas will never raise gas tax when gas prices are going up. But when they are going down, the state could add a penny to the gas tax. No one would see or feel the tax increase.

Q: Property tax is more here than in California and Massachusetts, even though the price I bought my home for is much less. Will this be addressed?

A: Your property tax is 50-60% related to school tax, mostly because of the money we send out of state. We have five taxing entities. There is a big segment of the state concerned about property taxes overall. IF you’re property taxes are too high, you vote those people out.

Q: A good resource you recommend on how everything is broken down?

A: Appraisal district website has everything broken down.

Q: Austin is talking about knocking down school buildings. Can you get more funding for a new build than to repair and existing structure?

A: Ms. Cole wasn’t sure.

Q: High stakes testing. What are your thoughts about reforming how we’re educating kids?

A: She is looking forward to co-author a bill to get rid of these tests. Sheryl’s office is working with Donna Howard and other Republican and Democrats to work on this issue.

Q: Criminal justice initiatives?

A: A bill on ban on the box and on the freedom of information act to make police video and information available publicly.

Q: Redistricting: The hearings that are currently happening, what will come out of that? This won't happen until the next election?

A: The census needs to happen and so does the election. For more Democrats to have seats, we must have a fair census.

Q: Tax system is regressive in Texas. Property taxes are a burden. We need to figure out how to fix the taxing system. How do we make it better for the people who are carrying the burden?

VII. WPNA stance on Climate Change: Martin Luecke

Martin would like to propose we begin discussions about climate change. If we don't say anything, nothing will happen. If we take a stance on climate change, we could pass our message to our elected officials and other neighborhoods. Maybe we start by making a list of things we can do to reduce our carbon footprint? Martin made a list of his own and distributed to meeting attendees. He suggested these discussions be broadcast in the WOW and other platforms so we can get the word out. When we can reach politicians, we do it in a way that is thoughtful and representative. 16,000 people in this neighborhood. If we go in with that number as a representation, we could have our voices heard by elected officials. IPCC organization released a recent report that said, we have 10-12 years to figure this out. Climate change organizations to consider: 350.org, Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL), Extinction Rebellion (XR), Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). Let's show up at City Council meetings.

Q: In what ways is it appropriate for a neighborhood association to engage in this?

How can we empower individuals to work on this? Can we work on things like transportation issues?

Larry Abraham moved that we appoint an ad-hoc committee with Martin that can bring back recommendations about climate change to the neighborhood. Motion was seconded.

Suggestion for the ad-hoc committee to pursue practical ways for the neighborhood to conserve energy. Survey to the neighborhood to get their ideas. Additional discussion around ways we can lead by example at our meetings and take a two-prong approach: appreciating what we have and understanding the fear of doing nothing.

Sara Jane suggested: bring your own mugs to the monthly meetings! Dan will add this to the agendas as a reminder.

VIII. Committee Reports:

Parks- The two draft designs for Pomerleau are available for comment and upgrading on It's My Park Day. There will be a third meeting to approve the master plan for Pomerleau

Social Committee- Second Saturday in April in the afternoon. **If you know of someone who plays in a band, or likes to paint, let a member of the Social Committee know.** We also want different committees to be involved.

Revitalization Committee- The Wants and Needs Survey now has a Spanish translation. We will reissue the survey to reach more people. We want to reach a broader audience. **If you have connections to apartments, we can broaden our horizons. Emily Sawyer will reach out to schools. Committee is looking at the neighborhood plan and looking to implement ideas in the plan. Rick will post a link to the plan for those who are interested in looking at it.**

IX. Closing: Meeting was adjourned at 11:52 am.

