

WPNA Meeting Minutes

Memorial United Methodist Church

9/14/19

1. **Welcome:** Dan Strub began the meeting at 10:15 am. We welcomed new neighbors and first-time guests to the meeting. Dan also thanked sponsors and reminded everyone to patronize those businesses that support our newsletter. We thanked our newsletter deliverers.
2. **Citizen's Communication**
 - A. **Meghan Dougherty:** Many events coming up! Join our [WP Facebook page](#) to learn more. Hope Lutheran Movie Night on NNO, October 1. Several Happy Hours coming up in the neighborhood. Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Mennonite Church on October 5. September 21 we will be having a neighborhood yard sale! If you'd like to have a yard sale, there's still time to get your address on the list. Email meghan@windsorpark.info for more information.
 - B. **Karisha Community:** BBQ on Oct 5, a volunteer day on the land in the morning to clean up the area. Karisha Community is a holistic wellness center. Check out their events on their website: <http://karisha.org/>
 - C. **Kelly from WP Library:** Sept 28- showing Coco and having a craft time afterward. Event from 2-4 pm today for Spanish Heritage Month. Storytimes have started again on Tues night, Thursday and Friday morning. Please share ideas, comments, complaints in the comment box at the library. They do read all of them!
 - D. **Nadia Khan:** On Sept 15 from 9-11 am, we're doing a creek clean up at Tannehill Branch. On Wednesday of last week, the Contact Team met with a rep from the buyer of the Promiseland property. They are requesting a zoning change. The plan for the property is commercial space on the first floor with four floors of housing. Only a portion of the site was sold. Additional news, according to the Annual Mobility plan, Belfast is slated to get a sidewalk next year.
 - E. **Rick Krivoniak:** We're looking for a secretary and treasurer for next year for the WPNA, please consider volunteering for one of these positions.
3. **[Kiwanis Club of Northeast Austin: John Cano](#)**

First Butterfly Festival last spring. Sunshades Project for WP was the beneficiary of the festival. \$1300 check was presented to the WPNA. Working with Winn Elementary PA this year for their festival. Tres Amigos at noon on Thursdays are meeting dates. Several evening meetings as well if you can't make a meeting during the day. Northwest Club sells peaches in July and September. Kiwanis Club NE is also a sponsor of the New Tech Key Club and McCallum Key Club.
4. **Yard of the Month: Sara Jane Lee**

Vaaron Juarez & Amber Miller. 1308 Briarcliff Blvd. Lived there for 3 years. Native plants that require little maintenance and water. They will receive a \$50 gift certificate from Shoal Creek Nursery.
5. **Minutes for August 2019:** One change-add Governor to Item 6 "Lt. Governor Dan Patrick". Minutes were moved to be accepted, seconded and all were in favor.
6. **Volunteer position:** Looking for a new webmaster for our WP website. If anyone would like to step up, please let Dan Strub or Meghan Dougherty know.

7. AISD Trustee Forum: Trustee Cindy Anderson, LaTisha Anderson, Arati Singh

Q: What is your greatest concern about the draft scenarios for this neighborhood?

LA: No outline to say how the academics will be improved in this area, no clear plan to address changes in leadership and teachers.

AS: We are not looking closely enough at the data that will bring us to the achievement that we want. What staffing, training and instructional changes will be made to special education in WP schools? How do we attract better teachers to Bertha Sadler Means? More teachers of color in WP schools? Mobile population is high, what can we do to address this?

CA: Need a much better understanding for what achievement and outcomes are for our graduates. We want to eliminate the question, "Where are the good schools?" What is it that we can do to help stabilize the schools in these areas? If we can't fill up those schools, we lose resources. Accountability ratings are a concern (even though it's just one data point for our schools). This proposal does have an intentional shift in our culture. It makes a point to say that every student comes into the classroom with gifts.

Q: In what ways do you think this plan will lead to more equitable educational access/outcomes that it proposes?

AS: Do we define equity by the programs we have? What if kids aren't ready to take advantage of the programs when they arrive? People are scared to see their schools close because they love their community. We need to reassure the public that what they are getting is going to be better.

LA: How can we get from discussion to action? My hope is that when administration brings back the changes, we're doing more than just talking.

CA: Shift to expanded hours for schools is huge for us. Will provide additional help for students, enrichment programs for kids. Could we be bolder and provide year-round schools? This could eliminate the need for teachers to have more than one job. Easier for parents, provides opportunities like teaching swimming to kids and other innovative ideas that kids wouldn't necessarily have access to. With Bertha Sadler Means, the goal was for it to look similar to Ann Richards and it hasn't done that.

Q: What is missing from the plan?

LA: Academics, educational plan, teachers. A lot of first year teachers in the area. How do we bring forth a plan so the mass of new teachers aren't taking such a large number of positions on the east side?

AS: There are things the district is doing that aren't in the plan. One of those things is Bilingual Education. Large percentage of students in WP who are English Language Learners. Our current policy and accountability system doesn't have that perspective of abundance. Every principal is held accountable for making sure all kids are reading on grade level by third grade. We've asked Dr. Cruz to change this policy for our non-English speaking students.

CA: A number of things missing including sensitivity. Language in some of the proposals, consolidations and closures that didn't show respect to schools involved. What are the underlying core values that we have? What is it about modernization that aligns with our core values? It's not articulated well in the documents as to why the schools were chosen for closure and/or consolidation.

Questions & Comments from WP Neighborhood:

Q: Equity Director defined equity in terms other than equal dollars and equal resources. It may require twice as much at Harris as other schools. **How strong of a commitment can we expect from the District and other members of the board? Is there a will to do something about equity?**

CA: Let's get rid of the anotacted staffing formula and focus on the exact need of the kids. A model more specific to the needs of the kids. There is a will to do it on the board. Let's actually shift the culture of the district to what's best for the kids.

Q: The reasoning behind a couple of schools closing- **why weren't there west Austin schools chosen for closure and consolidation? Can you share why Bertha Sadler and any one elementary school in our area are proposed to close?**

CA: Bertha Sadler Means- built for 1000 students. Enrollment is currently 371. Facility is in disrepair. Struggled academically with outcomes. Allowed us to justify the new middle school in Miller. Hasn't kept kids together as cohorts. Ann Richards has 800 kids. Hard for the district to support two single gender schools of the same gender. Ridgetop and Riley: has to do with fidelity of dual-language. Ridgetop is all native English speaking with a very large transfer population coming into the school.

AS: Equity Officer is viewing these proposals as an investment on the eastside. These are the kids that need it the most. Would like to have her address this in our next Board Meeting.

Q: What is going to happen to protect the teachers, principals, cooks, maintenance people who are losing their jobs?

AS: Natural attrition in our school district. The district says no one will lose their jobs from these draft scenarios. We offer 3 year contracts in AISD.

CA: For the buildings that are being repurposed will still have a need for custodial, maintenance, etc. We might have excess in leadership and this will give us an opportunity to make sure we have the best principals in place. What will these transitions look like for schools? What principal is the best fit for this new community? Can we put this into action and do it well?

Q: Middle school neighborhood question: worried about this leaving a gap for charter schools to swope in. **Vision for preparing 6-8 grade kids who will be consolidated to NE?**

LA: Preparing students at the foundational level. If a student gets to a new school and can't read or do math, how can they be ready for schools with special programming? There hasn't been an answer to this question.

CA: Challenges with how MS works in WP. Garcia will go from 6-8 to 6-12. Equivalent opportunity to Ann Richards. 2022 is the date for new middle school. New NE plan is adding grades 6-8 to Reagan High School. Middle school is hardest transitional level. Bringing middle school students into an established high school is challenging. Currently, only Blanton kids are zoned to go to the new middle school.

Q: Nothing in the plan that shows how we're going to elevate schools that aren't successful. **Is AISD facing such an emergency that we need to close 12 schools?**

AS: Our number one need is paying teachers what they deserve. Before passage of the House Bill 3, we were only going to be able to give teachers a 1% raise. We need to pay teachers to teach in our hardest schools. The pay raises we voted on are permanent so we need that money from the legislature each session. Re: Pease School- let's invest in our people and instructional materials so more kids can get the

advantage that kids in Pease receive. With proper investments and attention, we can recreate this. People don't trust that this will happen. If we have a written plan, I think we can make people feel more comfortable.

CA: Average age of our buildings is roughly 50 years. We've lost 6100 students. House Bill 3 doesn't provide money for facilities and can't bring back the number of kids we've lost. House Bill 3 didn't fix recapture for us. It did provide some relief- especially regarding compensation.

Q: Pease has become a neighborhood school for many WP families who have parents that work downtown. The location has allowed us to attend our children's school activities. **Could we bring more kids into a school that works rather than closing them down?**

LA: Could other schools model Pease? I don't know want a school to model another school because it doesn't usually work. I would like to know the answers to the proposed closures: why? How were these schools identified?

Q: Where will male middle school students go to school next year?

CA: Can we take existing capacity that we have, like in BSM, to bring kids together from Web, Dobie, Lamar and bring those kids together? Can you preserve the single gender model and do something in the interim while we wait for something to be built for those who don't have a place?

Q: Seems like the new Mueller middle school will not have the diversity that a school like Blanton has?

AS: Some programs are so strong that they are drawing in kids who wouldn't normally choose it. We're inherently segregated by affordability. There has to be intentional on-going conversation about this. Still concerned about the fact that three elementaries in this neighborhood are not tracking to the same middle and high school. I think the biggest challenge for this neighborhood is middle school.

Q: If you don't get the answers you seek regarding these proposals, will you vote for this in November?

CA: If it's an up or down vote, that would be challenging. There is an opportunity to do a number of things between now and Nov to break things up.

LA: I'm looking for clearly aligned academics. Programming. Specifically asking for Ready, Set, Teach. I want people to look and react on the feeder patterns. Looking for a plan that doesn't include a bunch of new teachers at the middle schools in east Austin.

AS: There is a lot that is missing. I would vote no on this if I were voting today.

8. Naming of Nominations Committee: Jane Churchill volunteered to serve on the Nominations Committee. Jane Churchill, Alana Carpenter and Rick Krivoniak were nominated to serve on the Nominations Committee. Motion was moved and seconded. All were in favor. We will need a secretary and treasurer for the 2020 year. Dan and Jackie have both agreed to run for next year as President and Vice-President..

9. Treasurer's Report: Meg Brooks

\$1800 of spendable cash. \$950 for next two months of newsletters. We really need sponsorships! We are trying a new level of sponsorship at \$20 month to sponsor the newsletter or \$200 a year. Your name will be in the WOW as a sponsor of the newsletter. \$5000 carried over

from year to year, historically, but not recently. Copies and postage are areas we need to consider to cut spending. There was a survey of the neighborhood to see what businesses people frequent so we can solicit the businesses that we patronize for sponsorships. Suggestions to charge people who are participating in the neighborhood-wide garage sales next year and targeting businesses in Mueller.

10. Committee Reports

- A. ***Climate Crisis Committee:*** Barrett Sundberg and Martin Luecke attended the Pecan Springs Neighborhood Association meeting. They got many residents there to start their own climate crisis committee. They've also been to Hyde Park, Wooten Park and Mueller. They will go to Cherrywood soon and others. Hoping to wind up at the ANC to pitch the idea to them. Met with Kirk Watson's Director of Policy. She reminded us that this is the moment to get on the agenda for the next session. Between now and Sept 20, suggestions are taken to get on the agenda. Call Sheryl Cole and Kirk Watson to put climate on the agenda. Please help us push this topic in the next five days. Our committee materials/resources can be found at www.windsorpark.info

Good topics/websites to consider:

Google the Carbon Dividend Act

Citizens Climate Lobby:

<https://citizensclimatelobby.org>

11. Closing: Motion to adjourn at 11:49 am.