WPNA neighborhood meeting

April 12, 2014

Martin Luecke called the meeting to order.

New neighbors/first time visitor introduced themselves.

Martin recognized newsletter sponsors and mentioned the role of the newsletter in our community. He also asked for volunteers to help deliver the newsletter.

**Minutes** are tabled until the next meeting. We will begin to post the minutes on the website so those who are unable to attend and want to keep up with neighborhood news will be able to see what’s happening during our meetings.

**Officers Scoggins and Hyatt:** Mark Hernandez introduced our APD reps.

* Burglaries: 25 of residences in the last few months, and 56 burglary of vehicles. In all of our sector, 61 burglaries of vehicles were reported, and of that number, 56 were from Windsor Park. Out of 56, only 25 cars were locked, 17 were unlocked, the rest were likely unlocked. Officer Scoggins emphasized the importance of taking things out of vehicles, don’t leave anything in the cars. Home burglaries are usually in the day time, and car burglaries occur in the nighttime. In the summer there are even more burglaries because students are out of school.
* Suspicious activity: There were only 15 suspicious activity calls. He encouraged us to call for suspicious activity. It is a 911 call. Officer Scoggins said he wants us to call because we will be allocated a greater budget if there is more activity in an area.

It can take a while for police to respond because they handle priority 1 calls first. Domestic disturbances are high priority and can take up a lot of time. There are over 100 of those calls over the last few months. Most of it is alcohol-related, and from the police stand point they mostly stop the disturbance and arrest offenders, although there are some programs for domestic abuse victims.

Officer Scoggins recommended camera systems, timed lights, motion sensors, deadbolts. Security systems are not as reliable because of the time frame to get police response, and offenders know they have ½ hour to get what they want before someone responds. Loud sirens can be more effective because it draws attention to the house and the illicit activity.

APD offers free home security advice, people can call or send an email to our APD reps.

* Mark Hernandez encouraged neighbors to form neighborhood watches and get to know your neighbors so we can patrol for ourselves. He is happy to help anyone who would like to get a neighborhood watch going. National Night Out is also happening in October.
* Group homes – the main problems APD gets calls for loud music, people staying out late.
* Sex offenders – There is a halfway house in our neighborhood housing people who have been incarcerated for sexual crimes. They have been released to Burke’s Supervised Living Center. The way it is set up everything is legal. They had been housed in Travis County, the center lost the contract, and they were sent to Houston, then the center in Houston lost the contract and they were sent here. They are under 24/7 supervision. They have ankle bracelets and they are not allowed to leave the property. They never have had any incidents which APD has had to respond to. The SOARS unit goes out and checks on them. It has been operating since the 1980s and staff is trained and lives on the facility. They have camera surveillance. It is not a sex-offender facility; it is a supervised facility including residents of a variety of backgrounds. There had never been a group this large before. No children are allowed on the property, not even for visits, and they cannot go outside when children are present. They are following all the rules. The state has to send out a card when someone moves in, but they don’t have to revise the list when people move out. There are about 35-38 people living there, and about 12 are the sex offenders. These offenders can go wherever, including back to their families if the family can keep them secure and restricted. These offenders are deemed unable to be rehabilitated and could reoffend. As of right now there is nothing we could do. We don’t know if this is a temporary situation or permanent. There are between 6-8 people in an apartment. Mental health institutions (MHMR) have exemptions for occupancy laws, and it is based on square footage per person. If someone tampers with the ankle bracelet or walks off property an alarm is activated, and authorities will respond. The people that live there have visitors who are not monitored. APD does drive through there frequently and has not noticed loitering. Officer Hyatt mentioned that in 14 years with sex offenders in residence, there has only been one issue. There are 182 registered sex offenders in the whole zip code, and in this case there are only 12 offenders with civil commitments in one house. There are concerns about the concentrations of offenders, parolees, etc being sent to this area of Austin. Neighbors are encouraged to contact their representatives. There are also concerns about unregulated, unlicensed residences in the neighborhood as well.

**Yard of the month** – 6711 Notre Dame Drive, Chris and Robin Lehr. It is mainly a vegetable garden, based on a traditional peasant garden. They receive a $50 gift certificate from Shoal Creek Nursery. Please nominate your neighbors’ yards.

**Schools** - we will continue to collect money for the fundraiser for scholarships for a Reagan HS student. We will also hold a happy hour to raise funds at Nomad in May.

School librarians at Andrews and Harris can use volunteers.

Ideas for reusage of the name Pearce - renaming the track, the library, the side driveway, plaque, historical exhibit with photos? Most people were in favor of renaming the library and placing a historical exhibit of Pearce MS in the library. So far top votes on the AISD website were to change the name of Pearce to Bertha Means.

The second week of May is teacher appreciation week, so please take time to appreciate teachers. We will be purchasing some fruit and chocolates to leave in the teachers’ lounge at Harris, Blanton, Andrews, Pearce, and Reagan.

Budgets – the cost of the newsletter is increased. We need more volunteers to deliver newsletters.

**Mueller** – Smashburger has recently opened.

**Mobility 35** – most of the traffic on I 35 is short trips. TXDoT was considering creating super streets from the access roads, but that seems to have been struck down.

Rick Krivoniak introduced the resolution about what we want to see TXDoT do with the renovations of I35. Proposal to rewrite the resolution to phrase “We want to improve east-west connectivity.” There was a question about hiring additional consultants because it costs taxpayers’ money. Rick explained that we had added that provision because TXDoT has made bad design decisions in the past.

TXDoT has been reluctant to use any of I35 for public rail.

There was a motion to accept the resolution as amended, the motion was approved and participants voted to send the amended letter to TXDoT.

**Austin Neighborhood Council** – Sheryl Cheatham is our representative. ANC is going to have a forum for 10-1. She collected questions that our neighborhoods would like to ask candidates. Sheryl was unsure how it would be organized. The election will be in November, and hopefully the forum will be in September. Windsor Park is in Districts 1 and 4 and we will have our own forum.

Greg Casar – he is a community organizer at Workers’ Defense Project. He’s running for city council for district 4. There will be a grill at 1407 Ridgemont tomorrow, Sunday April 13 from 1-3.

Land development code will be reworked, and they are accepting feedback from the public. Visit [www.austintexas.gov/codenext](http://www.austintexas.gov/codenext) Try to participate in character in a box.

Resolution – Onion Creek Flooding – it is being created to ensure people who live in flood areas are contacted. They want alarm systems put in if there will be flooding. Sheryl will send it out on the listserve.

**Parks**  - Jeanette Swenson presented on the parks. We are putting in about 40 hours/month for park stewards. Please join on Friday mornings in Bartholomew Park. Playscape shade fundraising is ongoing. Frost Bank will be contributing to the fund.

Pool – there will be a water polo team, diving instruction. Classes are now open for registration at Bartholomew Pool. They are short lifeguards citywide, so anyone interested should apply. The pool will open in May. June 14 at 10 we will have a big party for the pool in place of our usual neighborhood meeting. City council will be there, the pool and HEB will contribute to it. There will also be a diving show with the junior diving team.

**Announcements** – Mark Boyden announced a happy hour on Thursday 5:30-8 at La Palapa.

Funky Chicken tour will be next weekend.

Cement Loop is having an art show all month.

Community Character in a Box – Rick encourages everyone to photograph their houses and maybe neighboring homes. Send it to upload.100\_A.fwvote6zcp@u.box.com

Meeting adjourned.