WPNA Meeting

August 9, 2014

Martin Luecke called the meeting to order.

New neighbors introduced themselves.

Martin recognized newsletter sponsors.

Minutes from July were approved.

**Yard of the Month**

Sara Lee presented the yard of the month. Jason and Laura Hicks on Glenvalley. They received a $50 gift certificate to Shoal Creek Nursery.

**ACC Highland Mall**

Brette Lea, public information officer. Wednesday, August 27 at 10 am ACC is opening phase 1 of the Highland remodel. They would like to invite the public to attend the opening. Their goal is for this to be a true college campus. Students can receive all their core curriculum at this campus. They’ve developed a new model for developmental math, called the Accelerator. They can start with an accelerated class on their own time, using one of their 604 computer centers. The math faculty will be on site to assist students. The instructors can watch your progress on the centers. If they see a lot of students struggling, they can pull the students for small-group instruction. Even if a student has to take a break in the course, when they return they don’t have to start over, they can pick up right where they left off.

Students can attend for 2 years at a 74% savings from attending a 4-year college.

There are three phases:

1st is the campus. They will have 3000 students. There is capacity for 6400. They’ve renovating the old JCPenney’s. This has been paid for by students.

2nd involves the main part of the mall. This would be funded by a bond. They are training students for the tourism industry and health. They need to build culinary and medical training facilities. ACC has not been to the voters for a bond in 11 years.

3rd is renovating the old Dillards. They are working on an agreement with Rackspace to move their headquarters to that space. ACC will not rent space out to businesses unless there is a value for ACC students. Rackspace will be offering internships to the ACC students, and ACC will be providing corporate training for Rackspace. This has been paid for by private donations.

Bond proposals $386 million total on props 1 and 2. If both packages pass it will mean an increase of $3.33 per month on a house valued $200,000. M&O tax is the cost to maintain. So the total tax increase per year for a house valued at $200,000 is $62, for seniors it would $40.

Community would still be able to access the facilities. The libraries and computer labs will be open to the community. It would be designed to look better and allow for people to walk through there indoors in the AC (some people were concerned about losing it as an area to walk in, especially in the summer).

They already partner with Reagan as an early college high school to offer classes for dual credit. They are also looking into working with McCallum HS.

ACC has a service area of 7000 miles, and their goal is to offer courses in close proximity to students. There are 11 campuses, and some of the campuses are dwindling in attendance. They are hoping that the central location of Highland Mall will draw a lot of students and be easy for people to get to.

The current Highland Tower will stay.

Brette Lea said she’d come back to speak more on the bond, and bring some of the people in charge of these programs.

**School Committee** – invited principals to come to our meeting and present themselves. We will invite the candidates for the AISD trustee election to attend the next WPNA meeting.

Harris – Interim principal, Monica Martinez. The teaching team is stable, they only needed to hire 4 teachers. They have some UT students coming in to tutor students. She wants to work with the community and contact businesses to partner with the school. The building needs some improvements and she wants to make it more inviting and have community come in to read to kids, work with kids.

Andrews – new principal, Saleem Blevins. He’s been there for 6 years as a teaching for 2 and assistant principal for 4 years. He took over for Laurie Barber, who was principal for her entire career at Andrews. They have a fall festival and would like the community to come out and participate. Praise and Appreciation is the theme for this year. Mr. Blevins wants to promote the good work teachers and students are doing. He appreciates anything the WPNA can do to support the school.

If community members are interested in volunteer work, they can contact the parent support specialists to organize it.

Both campuses are rated acceptable this year. They have plans to improve and look at data to continue student growth.

Harris got a new portable this summer. Andrews will be renovating the library and office space this year, using bond money from 2008. They’ve grown from 500 to 700 students. The renovations will begin in spring 2015. Harris will be getting an AC upgrade. Harris is projected to be 709, and they’re in a building of 500. They have a large pre kinder population.

Harris’s attendance rate is 96.9%, Andrews is 96.2%, which is factored into the state ratings. The state still hasn’t defined all the targets for this year and what is considered passing on state exams.

Do they look at other successful schools in the AISD system for benchmarks and ideas on improvement?

There is a process for benchmarking student performance with other schools, to see what other schools are doing to raise student achievement. They try to target the populations at each school. The schools throughout Austin do implement a lot of similar programs. Ms. Martinez tries to stay on target with other schools, so that when students move and transition to other Austin area schools, they are at the same place. These schools have a high mobility rate.

Blanton – the new permanent principal will be named in the next week or two. The new principal will be attending our meeting in September.

Even though Ms. Martinez is the interim, she’s in it for the long haul. They will open the interview process in March or April, so she plans on applying for the position.

What causes the student mobility at these schools? There are many transitional homes in the neighborhood that are geared for helping people transition to new lives, so many of those people will find housing elsewhere. There are some families that have jobs where they need to move with the seasons, like construction work. Apartment market has affected many families. Many families sign short-term 6 month leases, and when rent goes up they can’t afford to stay, and so they move on.

How do the principals manage vertical teaming?

Vertical teams are composed of the elementary schools feed into middle schools, which feed into the same high school. Andrews – kids are split. Half of the kids go to Pearce and the other half go to Webb. Technically they are part of the LBJ team. It’s tricky to manage the vertical teams, and keep up communication with the principals at the middle schools

Ms. Martinez came from a middle school. They want to make sure the elementary school students are ready for the middle school’s expectations and standards.

Most of the students coming in to Andrews are coming in about a grade level behind.

**City Council Candidates**: Marin asked candidates to introduce themselves. Laura Pressley is part of the Windsor Hills neighborhood association, running for district 4. Her main issue is housing affordability. She wants to cut subsidies to big businesses to afford.

Greg Casar is running for district 4. He received the endorsement from the Asian community. Even though district 4 is just one part of Windsor Park, he would represent the interests of the neighborhood as a whole.

Katrina Daniel is running for district 4 and lives in the Highland neighborhood. She was president of the association. She’s on the campus advisory committee for ACC. Very involved in the community. She received the endorsement of the Austin Police Association.

Roberto Perez of district 4, he’s from the North Austin neighborhood, and works on Restore Rundberg. His concern is safety for all of district 4. He also wants to keep district 4 affordable for renters and homeowners.

**Mueller updates**: Rick Krivoniak said there was no commission meeting last month. One of the former commission members resigned and passed away recently. There is now a new position, if any one is interested they can register at the city clerk’s website or go directly to the office and fill in a form. The Mueller Commission has been in existence for a while to advise on the developments in Mueller. Rick has committed to stay until July of next year. He probably won’t be appointed again, so he’d like to see another WP resident serve on the commission.

There will be a transition period after the city council election, and some of the commissions might grow as well.

Rick’s heard that La Madeleine will be locating in Mueller soon. Torchy’s is still aiming for a September opening date, and they will be located in the space on the corner of Berkman and 51st. There will be two bars opening some time in the next year.

On August 14 there’s a meeting at Our Lady’s Maronite Church for traffic on Berkman within Mueller. They will have reps from the City of Austin Transportation dept. They will present on how Mueller should look when fully built out, which should be done by 2015.

Mueller Blvd at 51st will be the next location for a traffic signal. The AISD Performing Art Center will probably be opening in Spring.

Currently there is no indication that they will be placing traffic circles in Mueller.

**Candidate Forum** –WPNA is split between District 1 and District 4, and a little bit which is in District 9. In the past we have planned forums with other neighborhood associations. Rick asked if we should have two separate forums for district 1 and 4, or one for the whole neighborhood. We could work with other neighborhoods or we could have our own. There are about 2 months left to register for the election. This will be a very researched election. Our votes will be used to make decisions about future elections.

**Parks Committee** – Can the pool be kept open after August 24? There was a suggestion that we send a formal thank you to the Aquatics Department.

The tee shirts are available with a $15 donation to the Shades Project. There is also a $10,000 match thanks to Austin Parks Foundation until the end of September, so now is a good time to make a donation.

We are about to sign the contract for the first of the three shades. There has been some debate over color choices. The Parks Department had decided that only two colors would be allowed in the parks, so we are currently negotiating on the colors.

Electric Company is an events company. Jason Hicks presented on the plan for the old Casa Grande Market in Windsor Village. They will be turning it into a coffee shop/bar/restaurant with playscape. It’s 8000 square feet. He’s put a group together from Quality Seafood, Whole Foods, etc. He showed a rendering of what the end cap would look like. Restaurant will be called Odelay and the bar will be Upper East Side. There will be a large patio with shade. Every thing will be made from scratch. They are in the final stage of financing. They are focusing on small plates, trying to do some farm to table. They will do a light breakfast menu at the coffee shop, open till midnight at the bar. They will do community events such as big barbeques in the fall. They will have family brunches. They will be able to have alcohol on the patio, and possibly dogs.

Meeting adjourned.