WINDSOR PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES 7/8/23

President Jeanette Swenson called the meeting to order at 10:15.

Thanks to Fernando Alvarado and Talisman Coffee for the coffee and to Josh Pitts for the donuts and Brian and Jane for bringing tomatoes.

Thanks to supporters, sponsors, and newsletter deliverers. Berkshire and Ravensdale have not gotten newsletters.

New members were invited to introduce themselves.

Citizens’ communication: David Butts said that Pomerleau Park is now open. Carol Kent said that they are working to get priority for sidewalks on Linda between the park and Harris Elementary. She encouraged people to call 311 to request the sidewalk. There is a WPNA committee to get the sidewalk built. The Carousel Lounge celebrated their 60th anniversary last week. Rosaena Recendez talked about the mental health resources links that are now available on the WPNA website. They are color coded by age of people needing help. Brad Perkins spoke on his self-defense and safety seminars he offers for women. The 2-hour class costs $30 at 1604 Glencrest Dr. Jeanette affirmed that the class helped raise her self-awareness and that incidents should be reported to our APD neighborhood rep Andre Black. Sandra Martinez reminded that there was a fatal shooting at Dottie Jordan. David Butts said that there is a person, likely driving a red car, who is stealing mail out of mailboxes, and that if you see it please report him. Rick Krivoniak said that Council will be discussing the Vertical Mixed-Use ordinance later this month, and that a Windsor Park based group met with Councilmember Vela’s office on it. One point of contention is live/work units being used to count as commercial space, as well as subdividing a development to avoid some requirements. Keith Edwards said that he had gone to Mueller NA and ANC meetings. The ANC meeting focused on the I35 redevelopment and sustainability issues at City Council. He said that there was much to possibly be gained from re-engaging with ANC. Kelly Overton said that the Windsor Park Library now has story panels set up along the walkway out front that is part of a national program to promote reading and art. She asked for our input on what we would like to see on the panels. She also said that Martin Luecke had asked if they could carry a book about a local resident, and Kelly told him that they could carry and have a program around the book at the library.

Bylaws Amendment: Rick Krivoniak moved to adopt the amendment. David Butts seconded. The amendment passed 20-2.

Nadia Barrera-Ramirez of Cap Metro, and Alex Phillips and Caitlyn Dalton of the COA Transportation and Public Works Department came to speak on transit system improvements slated for Windsor Park. COA provides transportation facilities such as bus and light rail stops and works on how they interface with roads, bike lanes, and sidewalks, while Cap Metro provides the bus and light rail service. COA looks to have bus pull outs where there are timed stops and where there is high speed traffic. The Transportation Dept is looking at the scope of concerns around bus service on Berkman. They will be coming to WPNA in the future to get our feedback. The new stop on Briarcliff at Berkman was relocated closer to the traffic signal to promote ease of transfer and improve pedestrian access. Alex said that at E 51st and Tilley the Safe Routes to School program is going to install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon like the one on E 12th at the Boggy Creek Trail. It is pedestrian activated, but does not require traffic to stop. On the long-range plan that intersection is labeled as a potential project to improve the crossing further. AISD is developing walking and bus plans for the new middle school. Metro Rapid is coming from Decker Lake to Downtown, and from Berkman and Dottie Jordan south to Goodnight Ranch, with service starting in 2025. The red line light rail improvements are also coming, including double tracking, as well as the establishment of the new green line. The on demand pick up service is available East of Berkman at $1.25 a ride. The Cap Metro Transit Service Plan will look at the changes in transit ridership since 2018 and will examine routes serving the neighborhood. A question was asked about the proposed rapid transit stop at Manor and Rogge, and Nadia said that the crime there is a concern, and that Cap Metro will take steps to monitor and hopefully improve the safety for riders at that stop, including that potential of establishing transit police. Brian Graham asked why the bus stop on Cameron was turned into a bicycle lane, and Nadia said that the bus stop is still there, but that pull out no longer meets the criteria for a pull out. Jeanette said that one solution would be to move bike lanes to more internal streets, off of the more heavily trafficked streets. Caitlin and Alex said that COA is looking at shifting bike lanes and that plans want to improve the safety for all modes along Berkman. Brian pointed out that the new school has been long planned but the transportation accommodations seem to have been planned only recently. Rick Krivoniak said that AISD is not recommending Tilley as a crossing, instead recommending that students and busses use the crossing at Berkman, and that other improvements are in the works including a realignment of the driveway into the skate park portion of Bartholomew Park. Amanda Rose said that there are opportunities on Berkman where new developments are being planned where pull outs could be located and where Berkman is not designed to support the traffic generated by the new developments. Caitlin said that they do coordinate with Cap Metro on planning around new developments. David Butts asked if climate change was considered when planning bicycle and walking improvements.

Reps James Talarico and Sheryl Cole spoke on happenings at the Texas Legislature. Rep Cole talked about the current special session on property taxes. She also said that during the regular session retired teachers were given a modest pay raise, $600 million were given to community colleges, Medicaid was expanded for pregnant women, and taxes were removed from tampons. Rep Talarico said that they killed Gov Abbott’s school voucher plan, although it sounds as if it will be brought back in a special session this fall after the Paxton impeachment trial. He also said that they had passed a bill the previous session capping the cost of insulin, and added to it this session allowing importation of cheaper drugs from Canada, pending approval by the Biden administration. They also killed a bill that would have required posting the ten commandments in public schools. Brian Graham said that it has been 22 years since retired State employees had gotten a cost-of-living adjustment. Rep Cole said that she supported it, but ran into intense opposition. Rep Talarico said that it is a fallacy that it is a choice between giving increases to retired employees and teachers. David Butts asked about the new Democratic proposal and if portions of it might be offered as amendments to other bills., such as assistance to renters. Rep Talarico said that he would continue to support it. He also said that the final bill may be an amalgamation of the Democratic and two Republican proposals, but those are band aids until the State picks up its share of education funding. Amanda Rose asked if there is conversation towards moving towards renewable energy. Rep Cole said that the Republicans passed a bill penalizing investment in renewables. Rep Talarico said that the path forward may be the renewable energy sector becoming more politically powerful. David Butts said that well head taxes on oil had not been increased since 1951. Selwyn Polit asked if there was any thought of planning for the future on spending the surplus, like the rainy-day fund. Rep Cole said that they did one good thing in convicting Bryan Slayton. Brian Graham also said that communities could not prohibit Section 8 housing. Rep Talarico said that they worked to weaken a bill that promotes banning books in schools, narrowing the scope. Rep Cole said that they failed in trying to protect transgender people, but did amend a bill that restricts DEI programs at public universities.

Treasurer’s report: Josh said that there is approximately $29,000, most of which is in the scholarship and parks funds, with about $7000 in the general fund.

Approval of June minutes: The minutes were adopted as proposed.

Yard of the Month: Sara Jane Lee presented to Reba Monti and Chris Faggioni for their yard at 1801 Corona Dr. They also won it in 2016. They will be given a $50 gift certificate to Shoal Creek nursery.

Jeanette said that we are in desperately in need of a nominating committee for officers this fall.

On 8 AM July 12, Austin Parks Foundation will be doing a photography shoot at Pomerleau Park and would like to have people there enjoying the park. Jeanette also thanked Melania Pomerleau-Peterson for donating the land for the park. David Butts pointed out that there is empty land behind the park which could be parkland as well.

The meeting adjourned at 12:07.