



Wednesday, December 6, 2023 Minutes

6:00 pm Board Meeting / 6:30 - 7:30 pm General Meeting
Monkey Hill

6:30 - 7:00 pm - casual board discussion, no business discussed.

Attendees: Tori Emmerling, Rob Denny, Nicole Williamson, Monica Clark, Stacey Ducombs, Mary Fanning Horaist, Marc Wiess

7:00 pm - Board meeting begins

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Discussion of land-use issues and meetings that Tori has attended at CDC.

Also present:

Elise Williams from the District A liaison Mayor's Office

Terry Germain - NOPD, temporary 2nd Captain

Aimee McCarron, policy director from Joe's office

Councilmember Joe Giarrusso

Bruce Goodwin, neighbor

Grant Cooper, neighbor

Amelia Leonard

one more neighbor

Councilmember Giarrusso reports and discussions

- Council passed the budget on December 1.
- Quiet Zones - part of the capital program this year. Meeting Dec 14 with Public Belt and city. Comment period until mid-February. Has to be reinspected. We've already met the criteria but a double check inspection. Second quarter of 2024 it should be in place.
- Everyone in city government got a pay raise. NOPD 5%.
- Ballot - code enforcement is its own department as of January 1. Legislated and funded. Anthony Davis is the official head of the department. Own staff, own department

- Money for infrastructure. We are lagging behind in spending it. 72,000 catch basins to inspect clean.
- S&WB - bad news is one turbine is 108 years old, and one is 65, steam-powered Communications during this last storm was bad, and they know it has to be improved. They have to have contingency plans in place. State has promised 29 million for this in October. Can we front the money and get it paid back is a question proposed so we don't have to wait so long. S&WB says that will move up the timeline. Joe is meeting with players to try to make this work.
- Goal in the future: Substation - primary source of power. Turbines will become backup power.

Monica question - what's the accountability about making sure this money and the deadlines are met? How do we do that?

- There is only so much the Council can do to make sure departments act the way they are supposed to. We need strong leadership, strong department heads.
- S&WB has been neglected for 50 years. They inherited this system, these problems.
- The money is not in an interest-bearing account.
- We have departments we have allocated money to, and they don't use it in a timely manner. We are seeking accountability from the departments.
- We hope by allocating more funds it will alleviate many issues with understaffing and other issues. It takes time.
- Right leaders needed for hand-holding and butt-kicking.
- Entergy is trying to spin off gas assets. All their main assets are in electricity.
- Berhard Capital is trying to acquire. They need to get federal funding.
- Entergy doesn't go to neighborhood groups unless they need something. Joe said they need to do that outreach, talk to people.

Mary asks about Audubon Batture project

- Last week they met with Audubon Triangle/Black Pearl - got very testy. Talked to condo associations. Near neighbors within a few blocks / neighbors / everyone else.

Mary was super worried about the levee.

- The Army Corps doesn't want to fight with neighbors either in regards to these projects.
- Your best course of action is against permitting. Do it before the permits are issued.

Mary also mentions that the oil companies are flying lower with their helicopters. More often and lower.

Tori brings up the various land-use issues in the neighborhood currently before CDC, and gives a summary of the meetings she attended.

- Some folks get frustrated with city council b/c you have more information than the general public and we feel in the dark.
- HDLC meeting today about the Car Wash (the Uptown Car Wash wants to demolish three houses fronting Tchoupitoulas to expand their detailing business). HDLC thinks the houses can be rehabilitated. They have applied twice about demolition. Appealed to the City Council and were denied. They were denied today and will appeal to the City Council again. Tori doesn't want it overturned and they are then allowed to demolish the three houses. They should not be rewarded for bad behavior. Message to developers - says getting denied by HDLC, then they can allow property to go to seed, appeal to City Council and then be allowed to demolish. It's dysfunctional.
- We support local small business. This is an odd property. The owners are already a part of the code of enforcement process. Either get it up to speed or sell them. HDLC and Code Enforcement can work in tandem to get it back into commerce. If you approve the demolition, it undermines all that and rewards developers.

Joe asks Tori for an email about this subject. Joe is talking to Code Enforcement.

- Car Wash houses are low-density commercial, it can be brought back into commerce.

Arguing back and forth if Tchoupitoulas is commercial or residential. People speak of Tchoupitoulas like it's Veterans Highway. There are a lot of residents on Tchoupitoulas St, houses extending from the Audubon Park to Jackson Avenue.

Tori Emmerling / FLUM -

- Joe says he takes a neutral position, waits to see what CPC and neighbors say. If the neighbors are opposed, I will not approve. The Riverside FLUM was not withdrawn even though opposed. If you want the FLUM to pass, you have to talk to the neighbors to win their hearts and minds.
- Car Wash expansion/ house demolition & apartment reclassification on State & Tchoup - CPC denied.
- Riverside Market - MUM is okay for them but not ok for Car Wash and apartments? Doesn't make sense. It's never going to be residential as per the developers.
- The FLUM is not binding, it's aspirational.
- Joe doesn't vote to upzone many things, very few during his term. Not a fan of it.

- CDC wasn't able to get through the whole FLUM process. Will they bifurcate it? Joe says it's possible they might, but not likely. Residents should talk to Councilmember Leslie Harris as well, part of it is in her district, before the 14th.
- Neighbors feel there is an undercurrent of the developer's intentions of that property. Joe has no idea what the plans are.
- Lots of leases at Riverside Marketplace are not being renewed. Word is Winn Dixie wants to renew but is stalled. Worry it is not going to be businesses serving the neighborhood, and we will become another medical corridor. It's enough that we demolished a whole neighborhood for a medical facility in Mid-City.
- Ask Joe to let us know if CPC sends it forward, even bifurcated.

Mary Fanning Horaist

- Two homeless people living in the neighborhood.
- A woman by the Car Wash on Tchoupitoulas. And a guy on Annunciation, the guy who walks around with the blanket.
- Elise Williams connected us with Nate from UNITY.
- ARNA is here to connect our neighbors with the resources. Unity is the resource. Homeless people can live in the streets if the city does not have housing to provide. If the city has housing, they do not have the right.
- The homeless man living by the CC's on Jefferson & Magazine has been helped and moved.

Mary: Shell - asking to not pay property taxes for the new development near the Convention Center.

- Joe is not very informed about this. In order to develop that area, they need Economic Development District designation. Payment in lieu of taxes. Shell is a tenant. It's for affordable housing, but Shell has become the face of it. It's a ITEMP, different criteria, tied to jobs. To get tax breaks, they have to hire people. Pilot is about an area that needs certain numbers to work for it to happen. They want a tax break to make affordable housing to work.

Joe out 7:52 pm.

Terry St. Germain - NOPD 2nd District report

- Eight police districts in the city. East and Ninth Ward are the worst. 56 police officers in this one. Really not enough. Resources go to the worst districts, then Quarter and CBD because that's where events happen, protests happen.

- 2nd district will be getting some new cops soon. Can do a little more proactive work.
- #1 by far the least violent district. This area is safe as far as violent crime goes.
- We have the ability to do more stuff b/c it's non-violent.
- They are doing more vehicle stops. It doesn't happen much overall, but we are doing them in this district.
- Car thefts are up 170% over last year. Mostly Kia and Hyundais.
- Most auto thefts are in university areas. Carrollton.
- Tulane Police is very active. Have responded to 6000 calls this year.
- Car break-ins overall are down.
- Now the same people are doing violent crime and breaking into cars. Steal a car to go to other cars and break in and find guns.
- Resident cameras are helping. Don't confront any car break-ins while they are happening.

Amelia from WRAP - the other night about 4 cars were broken into in the 5900 block of Annunciation.

- No matter what, report it. Best to call. But you can do it online.
- Don't leave a gun in your car.
- Report everything. People looking in windows, pulling doors, etc.
- NOPD now has drones.
- NOPD hates that WRAP is even a necessity.
- WRAP - 6 nights a week. 25 new members.
- CHNOLA has security patrols.
- They think the armed vehicle theft that happened on Annunciation, the guy has been caught.
- Ankle monitors - not a great system, but can sometimes tell you if someone was in the neighborhood during a crime.
- Residents should do phone call reporting for everything. It's faster than online. And it gives the NOPD a better chance of coming out.
- Because of low violent crime in the 2nd, officers have time for other things

Elise Williams, Mayor's Office District A liaison

- December 12 - Toy giveaway next Tuesday.
2101 Philip St. - Central City Senior Center
We have really cool toys, lots of good partnerships.
- Come to Elise with quality of life issues, can link you with appropriate city departments

Marc Weiss - No one is answering at 311 lately

- If it's a parking issue (in this instance, a blocked driveway), call 504-658-8200 Parking Enforcement. And let Elise know when you do that.

General business discussion

February meeting - do an in-person presentation of donation for Night Out Against Crime to Cops2. Coordinate with WRAP.

Monica -

Acknowledge Ann and Taceaux Loceaux at our next meeting for the Night Out Against Crime.

Website - Monica wants to put more information for the membership. We need to communicate with Jim what we want.

Big Easy Budget Coalition - a coalition to move funding into some areas where it's very needed - homelessness and outreach. Want to make sure we are being proactive about finding solutions for people who are marginalized.

Mary - RTA used to be much more efficient. And it's not serving the public.

Aimee from Giarrusso's office will send her budget. What is funded, more specifics.

Monica - how do we share this information with the community? How do we have accountability? Neighborhood associations, it's on us to be outward facing and share the information.

Elise - if you want a city agency here, just let me know 2 weeks out and she can get a representative.

8:28 pm adjourned

Next meeting: January 3 on Zoom.