

CHERRYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES 19 MAY 2010

1. Call to order, introductions. (6:34)

—SC Present: Robin Peeples, Girard Kinney, Deb Freeman, Tym Bales, Eric Boucheron, Jack Newman

—Approx. 40 people in attendance

2. General Announcements

—Cherrywood Coffeehouse is available and enthusiastic to host committee meetings in their private side room.

—A neighbor who lives near the train tracks is concerned about freight trains running during the day. Girard is going to help her get in touch with the right people at CapMetro

3. UT-Austin research project conducted by Sebastian Valenzuela

—Seeking responses to a questionnaire to aide his thesis about news, media, and public affairs.

4. Conversation with City Council member Laura Morrison

5. Committee updates

—Girard gathered neighbor consensus about his suggestion of requesting that "I love an Austin that is Beautiful" to the city's "Imagine Austin" program. No opposed.

6. Update on street reconstruction project and Cherrywood sidewalks by Richard Duane and Kevin Sweat of the City of Austin

—Brief summary of the sidewalk plan thus far, by Girard.

—Kevin Sweat and Richard Duane spoke about various street, sidewalk, and drainage reconstruction projects in the neighborhood. Kevin presented examples of how rain gardens function in public spaces. Suggested using 'pinch points' which slow traffic by narrowing the street for a brief length as a tool to help preserve trees that grow near the street and in the potential path of a new sidewalk.

—A neighbor asked whether the city is planning to use pervious concrete. For the sidewalks, they are not (currently), but they are planning to for observation areas around the proposed rain gardens.

—After the city did road ratings to decide which of the city's streets need work the most urgently, they decided that Cherrywood's streets are not high priority. This means that our streets are not currently scheduled to be reconstructed anymore. The funding is still there to do the planning, so that part is still underway.

—A neighbor was concerned about broken sidewalks being permanently patched with asphalt... Kevin suggests that issues with that definitely be brought up because that's not an acceptable permanent solution.

—Girard has suggested that a neighborhood committee make another map of all the sidewalk areas in the neighborhood that are damaged.

—Since the city will reach their next plan completion benchmark point well before the next general meeting, Girard will have the city planners come to a PZ&T meeting and invite all interested neighbors to attend.

7. FLWR / Update on Willowbrook Reach watershed project by Mike Kelly and George Walker of the City of Austin; by Lee Clippard of FLWR and Mike Kelly, George Walker and others from the city team working on the watershed project

—Brief summary of history of the watershed project, beginning in the mid nineties: In the original analysis, our stretch of Boggy Creek ranked poorly for water quality and erosion. In around 2004, the Watershed team went forward with the master plan as published in 2000. The city's goal was to 'restart the clock' on the watershed so that it could age naturally, but safely. Eventually, though, the creek actually reached an equilibrium on it's own, independent of reconstruction, and was able to correct its grade issues, stop eroding and re-naturalize. This apparently usually takes a much longer time than a few years, and the city was unaware of the changes that had taken place. After contact with neighbors, members of the watershed team re-evaluated the area and were shown the various unique natural and wildlife features of the Willowbrook Reach by the concerned neighbors. They have come to essentially the same conclusion as the neighbors about what is needed in the area and what isn't.

—They are still concerned about exposed waste and water pipelines and would like to continue to address solutions to those issues. It's possible that the number of pipes crossing the stream can be reduced from 2 to 1.

—They were initially still considering using rain gardens, but our thick clay 'houston black' soil may potentially make that impossible.

—The watershed team will set up a standing monthly appointment to come out to the Reach to evaluate and meet with neighbors so that the lines of communication stay completely open.

—Lee Clippard explained about how the city is currently installing a tap into the waterline they're working on at the moment so that water will be accessible from the Willowbrook Reach.

—A neighbor stated her concern that the city continue to not mow the banks of the creek. Mike Kelly explained that the group the city currently contracts with for vegetation clearing is prone to making this kind of error, but that the city is working to make changes to avoid issues like this in the future. Girard has suggested that the neighborhood be informed about and involved with whatever new contractor is hired to work on vegetation.

—Another neighbor stated concern about the steep drop between the sidewalk and the dirt path on the west side of the Reach. This will be discussed further in committee.

—Girard mentioned that while it's true that pedestrian bridges bring up their own issues and needs, he hopes the city will explore the idea that the best solution may be to combine the water and waste lines with a pedestrian bridge.

—To become a member of FLWR (and thus to stay updated on progress with this project), email Lee Clippard or visit FLWR's website at flwr.blogspot.com.

8. Introduction of CNA's new APD district representative, Officer Chris Davis: cancelled

—Hopefully we can make sure they're here in August.

—Dolly Ensey has met with our new rep, Officer Chris Davis and is enthusiastic about his future with us.

8. Meeting adjourned at 8:03.