



The Washington Avenue Corridor

Super Neighborhood Twenty-Two

WASHINGTON AVENUE BUSINESS OWNERS GROUP MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: Tuesday January 19th 2010

MEETING TIME: 3:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Core Apartments at 3939 Washington Ave., Houston TX 77007

3:25 p.m. Meeting Commence

Paul introductions: New faces name and business. John Deal Beavers, Saleem Pandora, Misty Cornelius Silver Eagle, Jeff the Lot, Jason, Paul Art on Washington, Meg Poissant Gallery, Jeff Trevino & Sydney Texas Real Estate, Frank and Christy The Core, Patrick McIlvaine First Ward, Denise Maui Wowi, Joshua Apex, Jonathon Max's Wine Dive, Tom Dornbusch, Ceci Gohlke Chiropractors, Memorial Park Conservancy, Betty Wabash, Jane SN22, Cory Block 7, Cathy Clarke Live It Big, Mary-Jane Watershed Studios, Lauren Washington Wave.

4:25 p.m. Presentation Councilmember Sue Lovell

CM Lovell: I have just come from the Houston Galveston Council, where a \$4 million grant for new sidewalks along Wash Ave. is being submitted by Public Works (Andy Icken). I am continuing to chairing Transportation Committee; I am new chair of Development and Regulation, which regards amending creating or changing code. It deals with annexation, city charter and historic preservation. I am not doing QOL anymore.

First thing to tackle is parking issue, preliminary discussion about the variety of conditions within certain pockets. We want continued business and residential growth. Will have stakeholders groups (Montrose, Rice Village and CBD also hotspots). Consider single most important issue to start with and will take time and a lot of effort.

I dealt with this in my neighborhood of lower Montrose in 70s and 80s because of good restaurants and clubs – people in neighborhood were very disrupted by the behavior of patrons – the new cm promised to pass an ordinance to ban parking in neighborhood and the businesses went away, and referred to it as “Beirut Montrose”; a few places hung on, talk at that time about closing off Westheimer from Montrose to Bagby but never happened and it took twenty years for resurgence. Stone Soup and other non-profits went in because rent was cheap. We'd like to avoid this.

Partnerships – with day business parking, city's roll to partner with them to make those partnerships for night space by sublet or city in some way would assist with it happening but the lots won't be crapped out. I see this a governments roll to share resources and assets in neighborhood. In Montrose St. Thomas has a 4-story parking garage. In Mid-Town HCC has a garage on the light rail – how can the businesses allow customer parking and they can ride the train or Washington Wave or they can hail a cab to get around. Someone said it was like putting a hand grenade down your pants but I have faith we can get together and make compromises instead of a mandate from city – enforcement will never happen, businesses will go elsewhere and graffiti and hustlers will come in.



Questions and feedback:

Lauren: Is there an update on some of the other areas i.e. Light Rail

CM Lovell: University Line will be funded by February. Secretary Ray LaHood economic development funding can be used along with transportation dollars to develop “livable centers”. Right now I know of nothing aside from the four lines about any light rail coming along W/Ave. The commuter rail Houston may go the Amtrak station, Galveston and back, Hempstead (Northwest Transit Center) on existing lines; freight rail at night and passenger during day. Gulf Coast Rail District’s sole purpose is to find funding to move some tracks outside of city. Panama Canal by 2013 will double in size and Houston will become central distribution center for North America. We don’t want stuff to be trucked out. The freight rail is to move some tracks out but the hitch is For Bend County because they are growing and they don’t want train holding. Also, looking for grade-separation funding. Need funding for 290-exchange for the rail and also for cars. TxDoT doesn’t have money and wants to go into the train business.

Lauren: is the parking matrix on hold?

CM Lovell: I have no knowledge of this.

Paul: Our last W/Ave BOG meeting CM Gonzalez said it was on hold.

CM Lovell: Why put a band-aid on something that needs a bigger fix.

Jeff Lot: Is city opposed to using dollars to build multi-level parking garages.

CM Lovell: No. there is no money. The first agenda is to raise water fees greatly because this hasn’t been done in a while. The city might look to give developers a break in some way to build garages.

The Social: New businesses do not have enough parking available to them.

CM Lovell: Industrial area where Silver Eagle used to be, we may be able to say they need to keep a portion as parking. In Montrose we have problem of private schools and Universities, they are finding loopholes to tear down houses to turn into parking lot.

Tom: resistance in shared parking would be businesses not wanting liability associated with night-time parking.

CM Lovell: My discussions so far haven’t been around liability; it’s about trash or cars left behind by drunken patrons. Towed cars don’t encourage people to take cabs home when they are drunk.

Saleem Pandora: is it possible to put the money slated for the sidewalk meters and put it toward parking garages?

Lovell: It would require a management district designation i.e. a parking management district. Right now the city is just looking for revenue to continue operations without layoffs.

Rene HRA: I think the businesses will be concerned if a CM agrees to allocate meter money to districts, then other CMs would want to do it for their own area.

CM Lovell: Perhaps a formula to control this. CM Clutterbuck’s problem in Rice Village is very different than W/Ave.

Jane: Say more about mechanisms required to get things done. For example, SN22 has been trying to get a city task force. Captain Holloway recognizes there is a dis-connect between his department and Marlene Gaffrick’s department and the task force could help address this.



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CM Lovell: we are talking about moving forward and putting together a stakeholders group. In areas where there is a real problem, during the many months it will take to address problems, the stakeholders can help figure out the immediate needs to be fixed.

Jane SN22: We don't have a task force.

Meg Poissant: I have an art gallery and live behind a handful of bars near Yale and Shepherd and I have been working hard with city officials. The elementary school going in across the street won't have enough. The city is reactionary, not pro-active. In terms of timetable and task force, can you please re-consider the task force request. There is one property owner in the area that we have no leverage with. (Venot with Urban Living)

CM Lovell: I am interested in a private school, more than HISD because they may be more willing to work with us.

Corey Block 7: On sidewalk issue, with all the traffic on Rose, the neighbors have been putting up boulders and parking signs. A lot of mud has been created.

CM Lovell: They are not allowed to do this. Call my office and we'll come out.

Corey Block 7: I own a parking lot power wash cleaning company. Here's my card. I'd like to get a contract with the city.

CM Lovell / Jane: The TIRZ. I encourage this group to work on a management district. We just got one in Montrose after a veto. It generates dollars, it creates improvements. Over here, it may be the better solution than a parking management district.

Paul: We already have support from Senator Gallegos.

Patrick / Tom: EDO just got a \$5 million to do a study.

Saleem Pandora: Give us an insight on how WAVE stands with council.

CM Lovell: I think the parking problem has been raised to a level that something has to be done and it won't be easy. On the level of Mayor Parker, it's up there. There some work on code that needs to happen.

Lauren: I am leasing 450 spots, Jeff Weatherford installed a taxi stand at my spot we can mobilize quickly at 2 a.m. in the morning.

CM Lovell: It is because of Jeff Weatherford that this happened and we need more of this, encouraging the partnerships between businesses. Cab drivers aren't happy about the short run services through downtown (they aren't legal) but we need to figure a way to fold them into our transportation plan because they are pretty useful. (We ticket them and they keep coming back). The city bought another brick building along Washington (behind Police Station) and we'll have our code and ordinances. We are leasing space on top of the building to a company who is going to set up wind turbines on top. We will need parking for this and it may be able to be used for night time parking.

Meg Poissant: Is there talk of re-writing the parking ordinance?

CM Lovell: We're going to change it but I am not coming in with any fore gone conclusions about it. I'm here to here what we can do right away, possibly an amendment that is temporary. If we can get the task force and talk we can do that but we need to get the larger stakeholder group created and that will take a while. The stakeholder meetings involve putting up large sheets of paper and putting all the issues on it, then discussion starts and then solutions are suggested and it will take EVERYONE. If it is a good product, then not everyone will be happy.



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Rene HRA: Staff adds up very quickly

CM Lovell: Permitted parking can be available for employees; this is happening along Washington Avenue in the Cherryhurst area.

Meg Poissant: I'd like to suggest to the bars in the area that they do more concrete things to control their patrons as they are leaving. For example, bars can hire more security

Saleem Pandora: Aside from the bar owners (who attend these meetings), the other owners don't think it is that serious an issue.

Meg Poissant: Neighbors are starting to think they will have to take issues into their own hands. I am afraid it will escalate into something worse.

Lauren: People need to join the business owner's group. The bar owners, restaurants, galleries need to recognize the need to join together.

CM Lovell: If I send out letters to people that there will be public hearings about changing regulations that will affect their businesses, they will show up. The meeting will probably be towards the end of February.

Rene: Is the council going to expand the no-smoking ordinance to patios.

CM Lovell: No this year. There are too many things we have to address.

(Sue Lovell, Houston City Council Vice Mayor Pro Tem, Council Member At-Large Position 2; 832-393-3013, fax 832-393-3336; 800 Bagby, 1st Floor Houston Texas 77251-1652 Post Office Box 1562; atlarge2@cityofhouston.net)

3:25 p.m. Silver Eagle Distributors presentation of the Cab Program by Misty Cornelius

Program to designate responsible drivers. Consists of:

- Bar Mats "We ID"
- Table Tents "Responsibility Matters"
- Age Calendar "We ID" help door people check ids
- Lit-up Calendar "We ID" to hang on wall
- ID checking videos to help train bar employees
- Handbook of photographs of licenses
- Coasters "Wanta go home with me tonight"
- Cab Voucher Program. Alert Cab, Greater Houston Transportation (Yellow, United, Fiesta) a program to send people home by cab by the bar tender.
 - o 25 vouchers to use as one sees fit. Should last about three months. Each voucher is for \$20.
 - o Back door sign
 - o Stickers

Silver Eagle Distributors, Misty Cornelius, Communications Manager, Consumer Awareness & Education, 7777 Washington Ave., Houston, Texas 77007 mcornelius@sedbud.com, main 713-869-4361, direct 713-860-3595, fax 713-867-8114, mobile 281-831-7541

4:45 p.m. Group Election

The following people volunteered to serve on the Washington Avenue Business Owners Group :



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- Chairperson – Rich Taylor
- Vice Chair – Corey Broche
- Secretary – Jeanette Chinelli
- Marketing - Lauren Barrash
- Membership – Meg Poissant

4:50 p.m. Announcements

Saturday April 3rd, www.MemorialParkConservancy.org

Houston Press has launched a Washington Avenue page.

Houston Tomorrow Clark Martenson,

4:52 p.m. Quiet Zone update / TxDOT I-10 expansion: Paul Nicosia

Quiet Zone: Train horns will cease along the W/Ave corridor in 2010. The first phase will be from Sherwin to National to be done by April. Then by June in First Ward, the “Safety Zone” will be implemented; Thompson and Bonner Streets will be closed.

I-10 Expansion: February 16th at Reagan High School at 6 p.m. there will be a public meeting regarding the TxDOT expansion around Patterson Street at I-10.

4:50 p.m. Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 16th from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., location to be announced. Don't forget to bring a friend or neighboring business leader.

5:10 p.m. Adjournment